

SEPTEMBER 2006

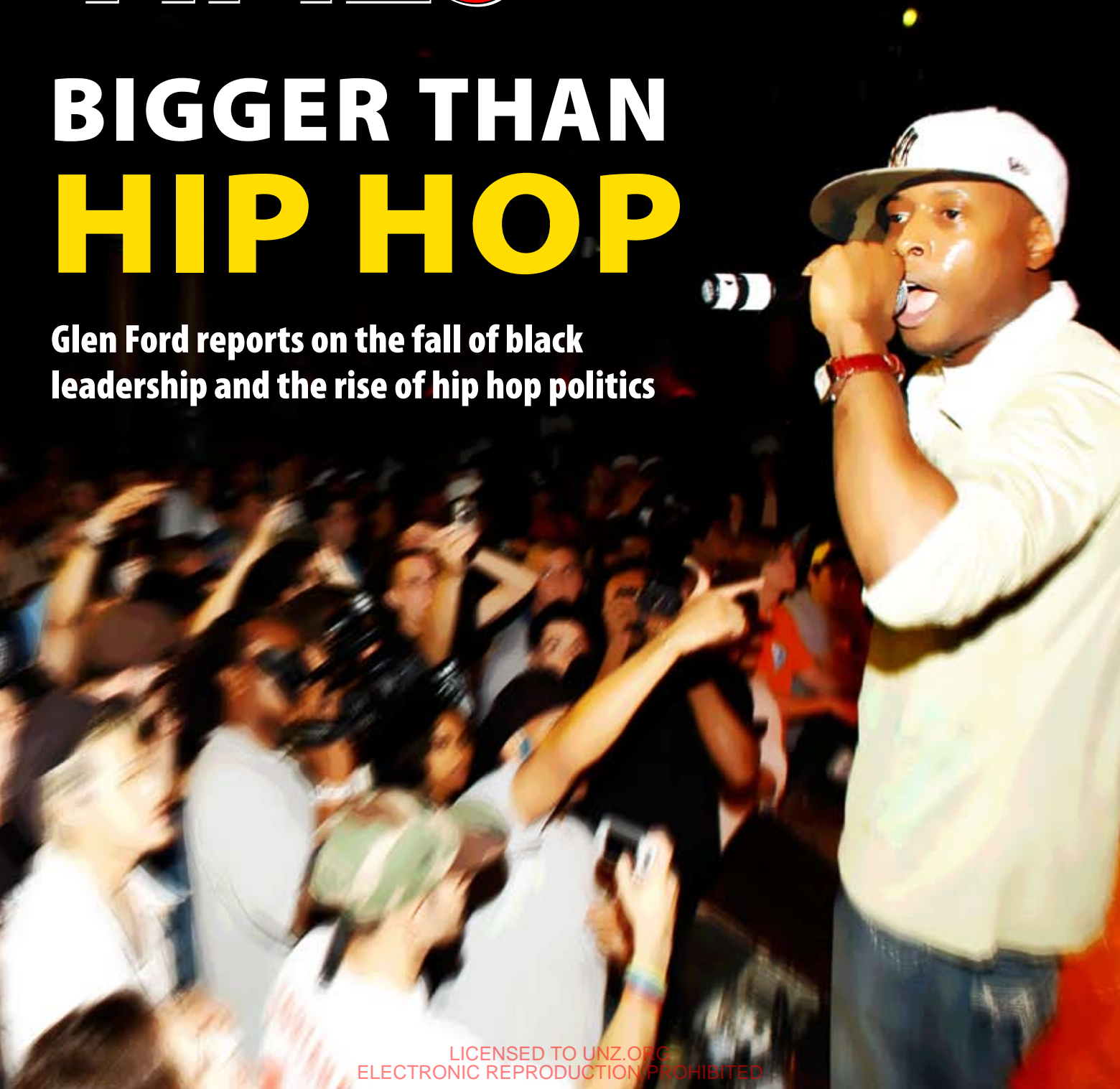
IN THESE TIMES

TEACHERS LAUNCH
REBELLION IN OAXACA

ŽIŽEK DEMANDS THE
IMPOSSIBLE OF ISRAEL

BIGGER THAN HIP HOP

Glen Ford reports on the fall of black
leadership and the rise of hip hop politics



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contents

VOLUME 30 - NUMBER 09



FEATURES

- 18 DO YOU HAVE FIVE MINUTES FOR...?**
How the canvassing industry cannibalizes young progressives
BY GREG BLOOM
- 20 BIGGER THAN HIP HOP**
Looking for black leadership at the National Political Hip Hop Convention
BY GLEN FORD
- 24 THE GOOD WAR ON TERROR**
How the Greatest Generation paved the road to Baghdad
BY CHRISTOPHER HAYES
- 29 LET'S BE REALISTS, LET'S DEMAND THE IMPOSSIBLE!**
Everyone knows how to solve the Israel-Palestine crisis; so why don't we?
BY SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK
- 32 EXAMINING IRAN'S TIES TO HEZBOLLAH**
Just how much influence does the Islamic Republic wield?
BY WILLIAM O. BEEMAN
- 34 THE DEATH OF DOHA**
The WTO model has collapsed. Now what?
BY DAVID MOBERG
- 36 PRAIRIE POPULIST: BYRON DORGAN**
The Democratic senator from North Dakota talks about his new book, *Take This Job and Ship It*
BY DAVID SIROTA

FRONTLINE

- 8 NEW ORLEANS AFTER THE DELUGE**
As the Latino population explodes post-Katrina, organizers must mend racial distrust
BY JANE SLAUGHTER
- ALSO:**
–Teachers take over in Oaxaca, Mexico
–SDS gets resurrected
–Prison privatizing in New Mexico
- 12 APPALL-O-METER**
BY DAVE MULCAHEY

VIEWS

- 15 THE THIRD COAST**
The reparations bandwagon rolls on
BY SALIM MUWAKKIL
- 17 DROPPIN' A DIME**
Bill Ayers and Bernadine Dohrn debunk nostalgia for the '60s
BY LAURA S. WASHINGTON

CULTURE

- 38 WHY HEMINGWAY IS CHICK-LIT**
Without female readers, the novel would be dead
BY LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY
- ALSO:**
–Nancy MacLean on white suburbanites' politics of secession
–Susan J. Douglas decries the plague of plagiarism
–Steve Weinberg on the continuing relevance of I.F. Stone
- 45 HEALTH & SCIENCE**
Don't trust the Bushies with bioweapons? Too bad
BY TERRY J. ALLEN
- 48 BIRD-DOGGING HILLARY**
Confrontation on the campaign trail
BY NANCY KRICORIAN

COVER: Talib Kweli performs at David Banner's Hurricane Benefit Concert
PHOTO: BY RAY TAMARRA/GETTY IMAGES

It Came From the Beltway

TO ILLUSTRATE HOW human consciousness cannot be understood solely through observable behavior, cognitive scientists came up with a thought experiment known as the “zombie problem.” They defined a zombie as a mindless drone, a mere automaton, but one that behaves in ways completely indistinguishable from other sentient human beings. As philosopher Daniel Dennett put the problem rather chillingly, “Since [external behavior] is all we get to see of our friends and neighbors, *some of your best friends may be zombies*.”

What makes this experiment relevant today, of course, is that it prevents us from saying definitively that Joe Lieberman *is* a zombie, despite all the external evidence. But more careful judgments can be rendered on Somnambulant Joe and his Aug. 8 primary loss to “netroots” favorite Ned Lamont, although you wouldn’t know it from the hysterical reaction of mainstream pundits.

The standard narrative in the run-up to the election—best exemplified by David Brooks in the *New York Times* equating the primary battle to a “liberal inquisition”—was that the “centrist” Joe Lieberman was in danger of being purged by the “far left” Lamont. At stake in the primary, the Democratic Leadership Council’s Marshall Wittman urged, was nothing less than “the soul of the Democratic Party.”

Our punditocracy’s tethers to reality must be awfully thin if they can, with straight faces, label Lamont, a 52-year-old multimillionaire cable TV mogul who lives in one of the wealthiest towns in the nation, “far left.” It’s true, the man’s had some nice things to say about universal health care, but a national ABC poll found that two-thirds of respondents support that. It’s also true he’s called for an exit plan for U.S. soldiers in Iraq, but darn it if a June *USA Today* poll didn’t show that a majority of Americans agree with Lamont on that as well.

However, it would be incorrect to classify Lamont as “anti-war” in general. As the indispensable blogger Billmon has

pointed out, when it comes to Israel’s policy of trying to combat Hezbollah’s war crimes by committing their own in Lebanon, Lamont claims on his Web site that “the United States must unambiguously stand with [Israel] to be sure that it is safe and secure.” And thus the core of the Democratic Party’s “soul”—uncritical support for any Israeli action, no matter how self-destructive or immoral—remains unscathed.

Nevertheless, progressives should rejoice in Lamont’s victory, if only because it allows us one more chance to expose, hopefully for the last time, the lie of Joe Lieberman’s “centrism.”

To ask just a few salient questions: On what political playing field is it centrist to monitor and publicly attack students and professors on college campuses for daring to speak such “anti-American” views as “an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind,” and “build bridges and relationships, not just bombs and walls” (as the American Council of Trustees, a group co-founded by Joe Lieberman, did after 9/11)? Under whose definition, when a president calls for radical legislation that grants him alone the power to wage “pre-emptive war” whenever he sees fit, is it centrist to not only vote for it and thus cede away one’s constitutionally mandated duty, but also sign one’s name as a *co-sponsor* of the legislation (as Lieberman did in October 2002)? And finally (because we could be here all day), what kind of a centrist responds to the military, political and moral disaster of Abu Ghraib (as Lieberman did in May 2004) by thanking the man largely responsible, Donald Rumsfeld, for his “apology,” and then adding, “I cannot help but say, however, that those responsible for killing 3,000 Americans on September 11, 2001, never apologized”?

Lieberman may not be a member of the living dead, but it’s only in the world of the Beltway, where the opinions of tens of millions of living Americans simply do not exist, that he could ever be considered a centrist.

—Brian Cook

IN THESE TIMES

“With liberty and justice for all...”

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In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published monthly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 30, No. 9) went to press on August 11, for newsstand sales August 25 to September 29, 2006. The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright © 2006 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times* contract with the National Writers Union are available upon request. Contact the union at (212) 254-0279 or www.nwu.org. Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For subscription questions, address changes and back issues call (800) 827-0270.

Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through Big Top Newsstand Services, a division of the IPA, at (415) 445-0230, or bigtop@indypress.org.

Printed in the United States.



mixed reaction

QUID PRO QUO

THE QUID:

On Nov. 29, 2004, the Department of the Interior designated Houston as a port of entry for wildlife and wild game trophies, fulfilling the dreams of many Texan hunters, ranch owners and taxidermists, as it saved them hundreds of thousands of dollars in permit fees and other costs. The ruling was signed by David P. Smith, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, before he resigned in early July.

THE QUO:

A few days after signing the rule, Smith traveled to a billionaire oil tycoon's ranch outside Austin, Texas, where he was given the "honor" of shooting a buffalo from some 30 yards away and keeping it as a trophy. Normally, ranch and taxidermist fees would have cost Smith \$3,170, but, according to *U.S. News & World Report*, until Interior investigators began investigating the incident, he hadn't paid a dime.

“ I think that a man should not live beyond the age when he begins to deteriorate, when the flame that lighted the brightest moment of his life has weakened. ”

—FIDEL CASTRO, 1953

THE BOILING POINT

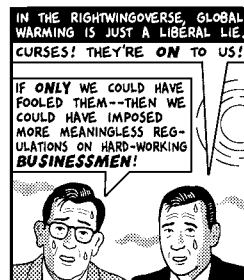
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THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

WELCOME TO THE RIGHTWINGOVERSE



the lexicon

The Big Lie [phrase]

historical usage:

In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler used the term to describe the propaganda technique attributed to the Jewish people that caused Germany to lose World War I.

current usage:

Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.) brought Hitler's rhetoric back in vogue, accusing Democrats and environmentalists of the same propaganda techniques when they warn against global warming. "It kind of reminds ... I could use the Third Reich, the big lie," Inhofe told the *Tulsa World* on July 24.

letters



Lasch Revisited

Silja J. A. Talvi, “Narcissists ‘R’ Us” (August), doesn’t seem to know who Christopher Lasch was or what he was about. He was a historian and not, as Talvi says, a sociologist. More important, Talvi almost totally misunderstands what Lasch wrote in *The Culture of Narcissism*. Although there is much to be said about narcissism in today’s America, Lasch used the term as a coded (and sometimes not so coded) pejorative reference to feminism and gay liberation. In many ways, Lasch had a bad reaction to the ’60s. It’s surprising to see this forgotten in a left publication.

Jesse Lemisch
Via e-mail

In Praise of Happiness

Jeanine Plant (“C’mon, Get Happy,” August) aptly describes several current approaches to achieving happiness. Yet at the end, Plant seems to trash all of the books under review, mischaracterizing the wide range of viewpoints with the slighting comment, “If you’re unhappy, it’s your problem.” Or to

paraphrase her own point: If you don’t feel depressed, you’re a dope.

Is it really our duty as good leftists to wallow in misery? It is this sort of attitude that has made the American left so unattractive to so many. In fact, it is the happy warriors—those in touch with their inner sources of energy, feeling and joy—who are the most effective warriors, most able to engage with the world and effect real change. Humorless, guilt-tripping, bummers essays like this are the left’s answer to the Bush-loving bible-thumpers chastising all pleasures beyond watching the PTL Club. Both bear the life-hating impulse of Puritanism—but at least the right-wing version offers an eventual reward for living a life of masochistic woe. No wonder they’re winning.

Hugh Iglarsh
Skokie, Ill.

Don’t Emulate the Right

I picked up the July issue of your magazine off a rack in Michigan because I saw Eduardo Galeano’s name on the cover. I ended up reading it front to back and found the whole thing to be interesting and well-written.

I was particularly grateful for Chris Hayes’ “The New Funding Heresies.” As someone continually working in foundation-funded lefty organizations, I think Hayes makes great, useful points that I hope people pay attention to. Still, after reading “Welcome to the Media Revolution” alongside the Funding article, I noticed a theme that rubbed me the wrong way: Why does the left

keep comparing ourselves to the right? It’s true that the level of organizing that the right has been doing over the last 30 years is a danger to our livelihoods, and that the left needs to get organized, fast. But I think that proposing to emulate the approaches that the right has taken is just simply not enough.

We should be looking to our people, past and present—to the civil rights movement, labor organizers, queer youth organizers—for our strategies and tactics, and prioritizing models of leadership and accountability that really do pose an ideological threat to the conservative movement. There is a difference between them and us: organizing for progressive social change is about equality, justice and people power, not hierarchy, fear, and the power of corporations.

How we talk about media, money, leadership and the grassroots needs to look different. The radical conservative movement has changed the playing field and the language for talking about issues. If we aren’t extremely clear on what our ideologies are, what our language is, and who our leaders should be, we will be incapable of shifting the rhetoric back to anywhere except for that languishing, ever-expanding ocean of ‘the center’ where democrats go to die. Every time we mention the accomplishments of right-wing organizers, we should be critiquing the dishonesty and instability of their fear-driven approach! We should be launching an attack on their approaches, not lauding them as something to imitate.

This issue of *In These*

Times gave me a great feeling about what the progressive left is revving up for right now. I sincerely hope that we are not revving up for a macho competition to show that we can play the same kind of hardball that the right plays, but instead for a truly needed reframing of the issues that conservative ideas are dominating in this country right now.

Lewis Wallace
Via e-mail

Funding Fundamentals

After reading Christopher Hayes’ “The New Funding Heresies,” (July) I want to offer one more heresy. Small is not always beautiful, and new is not always improved. Progressives need more effective and more powerful institutions, not more institutions. One of our biggest problems is that progressives have too many competent, but ineffectively small, players. Many progressive donors fund start-ups, with no clear vision of how those start-ups, if they prove worthy, are going to get to scale. This instinct is borrowed from the private sector, where it makes sense. If a for-profit start-up develops a capacity that it needed by an established competitor, or several start-ups clutter a space, there will be mergers, acquisitions, bankruptcies, IPOs. Good ideas get to scale. But the nonprofit world lacks these functions. As a result, donors could make a bigger difference by supporting an existing organization to develop a new capacity and grow, rather than setting up something new.

If donors spent more time

understanding the financial underpinnings of grantees, they could begin to encourage genuine nonprofit equivalents for acquisitions, bankruptcies and IPOs. Most large funders have, and seek, only the haziest, vague impression of the business models and financial underpinnings of the organizations they support. True, nonprofit accounting is not designed to measure business fundamentals such as gross and net margins or costs of sales. But nonprofit advocacy groups could, if donors sought them, be encouraged to develop and provide such analysis. Then maybe someday our side would have what it really needs—organizations with the scale and clout of the NRA or Focus on the Family to take on those behemoths of the right.

*Carl Pope
Executive Director, Sierra
Club, San Francisco, Calif.*

Christopher Hayes misses the point when he states that the labor movement is “self-funded ... almost entirely through union dues.” While it is true that the labor movement is funded through union dues, it is hardly correct that this is “self-funding.” Those who make up the rank-and-file of the movement do not have access to decision-making, and, in many ways, are not even part of the same organization as those who ostensibly run the unions on

their behalf. SEIU was one of the biggest contributors to the re-election campaign of California Governor Gray Davis, even though a significant portion of SEIU’s rank-and-file members are Latinos and did not support Davis because of his veto of the bill that would have allowed undocumented workers to drive to work legally. In the same way, Hayes misses the point about the issue of funding, which is merely a symptom of the real problem with the progressive movement in the United States.

The American left has, for decades, been a top-down structure, with educated upper-class leftists descending into the midst of the “people” in order to guide them toward social change as defined by the academic consensus. Absent the influence of the Ford Foundation, most progressive organizations would merely replace foundation parameters with their own, created in an equally elitist environment. One need only look at the campaign against Wal-Mart, which has been a PR success but has little real popular support because none of the progressive forces involved are offering a solution for poor people that will put food on the table after Wal-Mart leaves town.

*Jaime Omar Yassin
Oakland, Calif.*

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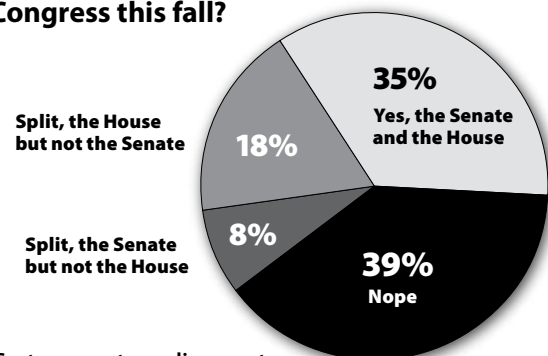
Neve Gordon on the “September 11 effect” of Israel’s second war on Lebanon

Lakshmi Chaudhry reviews *Temptations of the West: How to be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet and Beyond* by Pankaj Mishra

Salim Muwakkil on systematic racial bias and the torture committed by Chicago police

And check out blogger Brian Zick’s rapid-fire commentary on politics, culture and breaking news on “The ITT List”

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Jose (R) from Mexico and Christian from Honduras perform "house leveling" work on a home in New Orleans damaged by Hurricane Katrina.

After the Deluge

Big Easy organizers confront racial tensions

BY JANE SLAUGHTER

IN NEW ORLEANS, THE history of work in this country over the last 15 years was compressed into six months," says Saket Soni, an organizer for the New Orleans Worker Justice Coalition, one of several groups reaching out to workers in the post-flood city. To give workers a voice in its reconstruction, he says, the Coalition must somehow bring together new Latino immigrants with displaced New Orleanians, mostly African Americans, who are still struggling to return to the city.

Before the levees broke, Latinos made up three percent of New Orleans' population. Today, they've risen to 20 percent, as immigrants seeking work in demolition and construction have arrived from other U.S. cities and from south of the border. A study by Tulane University and the University of California, Berkeley found that nearly half the reconstruction workers in the area are Latinos.

As in the rest of the country, these two groups are mostly not talking to each other. According to a new report from

the Advancement Project, which worked closely with the Coalition to interview more than 700 workers, "The perception is that workers of color are competing for jobs. The reality is that private contractors are competing for the cheapest labor." Both unions and social justice organizations say they will need to confront divisive stereotypes if they are to improve workers' conditions.

Contractors have welcomed immigrants because they are more easily exploitable. Ana Mendes, for example, from Guatemala by way of Arkansas, worked four weeks without pay until she and a dozen others tracked the contractor down at his home.

Meanwhile, displaced black residents—two-thirds of New Orleans' pre-flood population—have been excluded from a city where housing is scarce and rents have doubled or tripled.

Their problems stem partly from the poverty that was a fact of life in pre-Katrina New Orleans, which had the fourth-highest unemployment rate in

the country and the worst schools. Tens of thousands of residents lived payday to payday on service industry wages.

"You cannot talk about doing any type of justice work," says Coalition member Kimberley Richards, a trainer with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, "without looking at those who were living in unjust conditions before the storm."

At Lee Circle, the city's largest corner for day laborer pick-ups, a young black man from Baton Rouge is angry at immigrants he perceives as doing better than he is. "They got Mexicans out here that are not even supposed to be here," he fumes.

"It's a pick and choose kind of thing. People feel like they can pay the Mexicans less and take more of them and get more work done. If they run up to a car where I'm at, I'm gonna beat 'em up."

Debra Campbell, a black New Orleans homeowner living in Houston and working to return home, says the Mexicans "are doing pretty good construction work. They're bringing in their families, and they're going to take the houses because they have money to pay the rent. Let our youngsters learn the skills so they can do the work."

The stereotypes run rampant on both sides. Michael White, an African American day laborer from Atlanta, insists that it's not about race discrimination—contractors are thinking only of their bottom line. He worked on a crew with four Mexican immigrants to gut a ruined house, and he didn't come back the next day: "A black man is not going to work that hard," he says.

Ana Mendes has had jobs cleaning hotels and homes. She says, "When we work, we work. When we take lunch, we take lunch. They [black workers] are more like"—she mimes a relaxed drag on a cigarette.

To bridge the gulf caused by such perceptions, the Justice Coalition is working with both African-American organizations, like the People's Institute and the People's Hurricane Relief Fund, and with experienced Latino day laborer organizers. In July the National Day Labor Organizing Network, based in Los Angeles, sent in a team of Latino organizers to recruit leaders from the corners and train them

in assessing organizing possibilities.

The Coalition has successfully pressured some employers to cough up unpaid wages and has wage-and-hour lawsuits pending. NAACP attorney Tracie Washington, a board member of the Coalition's fledgling Louisiana Workers Center, advocated on behalf of 200 Latino hotel workers to get them Louisiana state ID cards. She says, "They got the opportunity to see—all we've heard is that black people don't like us, and here's this person on behalf of the NAACP who came to our aid."

Coalition members are working creatively to find ways to bring these communities together. When day laborer leaders came to town in April with the Day Laborer Run for Peace and Dignity, says Coalition activist Robert Caldwell, "we put the event in a black neighborhood with a deep history of struggle, and invited key people to the planning committee. We had food prepared by the best cook in the neighborhood." Almost 100 people, mainly African Americans, turned out.

As these grassroots efforts look for footing in the ravaged city, national unions are coming to New Orleans with ambi-

tious programs, for what historically has been largely a non-union town.

In July the Laborers Union started free classes in construction basics, and in September the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) will offer classes for certified nurses' aides and home health aides. (Both unions are part of the Change to Win federation.) A spokesman for the two unions' Worker Resource Center said that graduates of the first one-day safety class were snapped up by employers the next day. The unions are counting on a construction boom when the government finally releases federal aid money to homeowners.

The AFL-CIO is coming at the jobs problem from a different angle: Two investment trusts sponsored by union pension funds will pump \$700 million into construction of apartments, hotels and hospitals, as well as home mortgages. All construction will be union, and the federation's Building and Construction Trades Department will offer apprenticeships.

The AFL-CIO says its money is the first major infusion of private capital into the Gulf Coast since the flood. "If the community sees that the union has decided to be

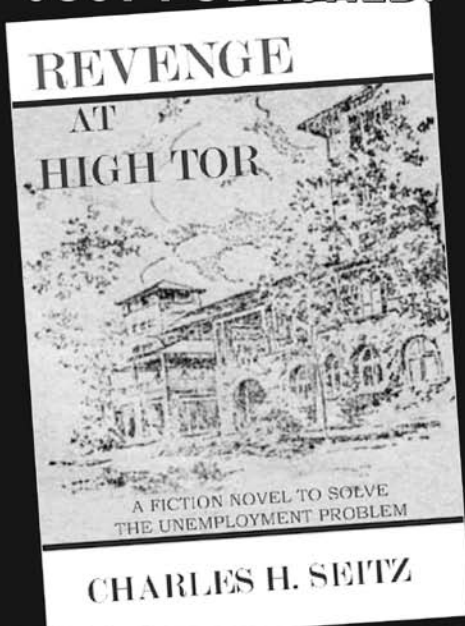
there for them in their fight to return and rebuild, they will see that a strong workers movement will benefit the whole of the community," says Gulf Coast Recovery Coordinator Arlene Holt Baker. "It won't be overnight that this will be a union town. We will be laying the foundations."

But who will get the jobs that are created? Although both unions say they are open to all, the programs are targeted at former Gulf Coast residents. Graduates of the first Laborers class were all African Americans. Rosana Cruz, Gulf Coast field organizer for the National Immigration Law Center, says, "For unions to come in now and just pay attention to Latinos, after decades of ignoring blacks in the South—'here's where we can increase our market share'—would be awful."

"We get past the tensions by recognizing that we don't have to fight over a \$6 an hour job changing sheets in somebody else's hotel," Tracie Washington says. "The fight is to make that job a \$10 an hour job, and to ultimately own the hotel." ■

JANE SLAUGHTER works for Labor Notes in Detroit.

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Oaxacan teachers take it to the streets.

Teacher Rebellion in Oaxaca

OAXACA DE JUAREZ, Mexico—Thousands of protestors have forced the Oaxaca state government into a bizarre sort of roaming exile, floating between luxury hotels on the outskirts of the capital. Governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz worked from the guarded Hacienda Los Laureles Hotel before he went underground. No one knows where he is now. The dispossessed state senators declared the elite Hotel Mision San Felipe as its “alternate headquarters,” only to be booted after protesters warned the hotel management that they would “peacefully take over the hotel” if the senators were allowed to hold sessions there.

Oaxaca is a city under siege, but strangely so. In Oaxaca’s occupied town center, tourists browse through handwoven skirts, wool blankets and painted wooden turtles as they walk amidst the tents and improvised kitchens of the city’s rebels. Shoppers on their way to outdoor cafés duck under posterboard signs calling for the governor’s ousting while marimba players compete for listeners with loudspeakers broadcasting the also-occupied university radio station.

Since May 22, tens of thousands of teachers and administrative workers belonging to Oaxaca’s Section 22 of the National Union of Education Workers have been on strike, camping out in the colonial town square, shutting off

highways, blocking government buildings and marking their territory—all of downtown Oaxaca—with political graffiti, reading, “The movement has no leaders; it is from the grassroots!” The teachers’ demands include school uniforms and shoes for all students, more scholarships, and an increased budget for school buildings and equipment.

On June 14, Ruiz Ortiz sent riot police into the town square before dawn to disband the teachers’ encampment. Police fired tear gas grenades from helicopters while more than 1,000 officers charged in, swinging their batons at anything that moved. Most of the 600 sleeping teachers scrambled out of their tents and retreated down side streets to seek cover; many were caught and beaten. Shortly after dawn the teachers regrouped, gathered reinforcements of up to 30,000 teachers and outraged residents bearing rocks, sticks and iron rods, and made their way back into the town square. The police apparently did the math and fled without a second round.

The failed attempt to violently uproot the teachers—coming only five weeks af-

ter police brutality in San Salvador Atenco erupted in a national scandal—backfired dramatically: It led disenchanted local residents to hit the streets and thicken the teachers’ civil disobedience encampments. On June 16, teachers and locals organized a massive march to demand Ruiz Ortiz’s immediate resignation. With one day’s notice, they put half a million people on the streets in a metropolitan area of one million inhabitants.

“As of June 14, our movement ceased to be a teachers’ movement, and became a social movement, a movement of the people,” Juan de Dios Garcia Santiago, a Section 22 union representative, told me outside of the blockaded entrance to the state attorney general’s office. The burgeoning movement’s first show of political strength was to promote and carry out a statewide “punishment vote” (*voto de castigo*) on July 2 against the presidential candidate of the governor’s party, Roberto Madrazo of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (or PRI). The PRI had won the presidential vote in Oaxaca since the party’s creation in 1929. This time, however, they got punished.

act now



WOMAN, HEAL THYSELF

Since 1997, the Hesperian Foundation has published “Where Women Have No Doctor”, a how-to guide for women in communities with no health-care providers. The book provides simple and direct advice for treating and preventing ailments common to women, while also addressing the social stigma often associated with women’s health. According to co-author Jane Maxwell, the book was created over the course of five years in a collaborative process with women in 40 countries. “Where Women Have No Doctor” is available in 20 different languages and can be downloaded for free at www.hesperian.org.

Emboldened by having humiliated the PRI, on July 5, representatives from Section 22, towns and villages across the state, indigenous communities, religious groups, collectives and non-governmental organizations—all spontaneously pulled together into a horizontal organizing bloc called the Popular Assembly of the People of Oaxaca (APPO)—declared their citizens' assembly to be the governing body of the state. The teachers then agreed to suspend their original list of demands and join with the APPO in fighting to bring down Ruiz Ortiz.

The APPO is explicitly trying to “create ungovernability” in Oaxaca to force Ruiz Ortiz to either step down, or be ousted by the Mexican Congress. In addition to the months-long occupation of downtown Oaxaca, beginning on July 26, the APPO set up encampments outside of every major state government building, including the state legislature and the governors' offices. They have all been closed since.

On August 1, more than 3,000 women—all members of APPO—marched through town, banging on pots and pans with spoons and meat tenderizers, chanting into the blanket of sound: “Whether he wants to go or not, Ulises is out of here!” The women went to the studio of the state television station, CORTV, and demanded an hour of live transmission to tell their version of what happened on June 14. The director of the station denied their request. But the women walked right past her, pots and pans in hand, took over the station, and broadcast live for over an hour. And they are still there, showing documentaries and broadcasting live daily.

“The struggle in Oaxaca is, in many respects, a precursor of other struggles yet to come,” says Luis Hernandez Navarro, an early member of the teachers' movement and now the opinion pages editor of the national newspaper, *La Jornada*. “Oaxaca contains the core contradictions in Mexican society and anticipates conflicts that will surge in other states.”

Electoral fraud, authoritarian rule, and the combination of the teachers' highly organized protests and the governors' unsuccessful raid led to a governance crisis with the teachers becoming the backbone of popular resistance, Navarro says. “This fight will continue; it will not fade away.”

—John Gibler

SDS, New and Improved

OVER THE FIRST weekend of August, more squirrels were scampering through the Quads at the University of Chicago than students or professors. But from Aug. 4 to 7, students adorned with political pins and T-shirts transformed the drab front hall of Cobb Hall into a scene reminiscent of a political rally. For the first time in 37 years, the newly re-formed Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) exchanged ideas and strategies at a national convention, one that contained both contention and hope for the modern student left.

Beginning in 1960 and lasting through the next nine years, SDS pioneered the teach-in as a means to examine and protest the Vietnam War and organized an estimated 100,000 students. The sectarian downfall of SDS at their national convention in Chicago in 1969 led to the disintegration of almost 200 active chapters and created a void on college campuses that many think remains unfilled. “The demise of SDS was so disastrous that it left many suspicious of any form of a national organization,” says Maurice Isserman, a history professor at Hamilton College, former member of SDS and the author of three books about the New Left.

But hope springs eternal. In January, a group of students and SDS veterans, led by Pat Korte, then a senior at Stonington High School in Connecticut, and SDS's first president Alan Haber, decided to re-establish the group. In just eight months, more than 1,000 students registered as members and 150 local chapters have started up.

The 100 or so students who attended the convention shared war stories from local campaigns. Chapters from various schools, such as Pace University, the University of Central Florida and the New School, also organized diverse workshops on broader topics ranging from “The Student Syndicalist and Unionist Movement” to “White Privilege and Gentrification,” allowing members to exchange tactics and organizing methods. The most passionate exchanges, however, were reserved for the

larger brainstorming session on how to develop a provisional national structure for the group, which included discussions on its purpose, voting processes and maintaining both democracy and the decentralization of power.

By practicing participatory democracy, direct action and chapter autonomy, the new generation of SDS organizers has embraced many of the idealistic values expressed in its predecessor's seminal manifesto, the Port Huron Statement. Members hope to create a viable, multi-issue movement that will effect



Pat Korte (at computer) hopes to resurrect SDS.

radical social change and reinvigorate the student left. “SDS is a valuable organization because it gives students an opportunity to define and direct their own movement,” says Korte. “It also allows us to build a movement that will utilize dual power, create alternative institutions and is modeled after a society we collectively envision.”

Why did the new crop of activists choose to revive SDS instead of starting a fresh organization? Despite its complex history, they believe that, as activists fighting for more democracy in the world, the name “Students for a Democratic Society” more precisely expresses their mission than any alternative. The revival of the name also attracted the attention of various SDS veterans who have created a post-graduate division known as the Movement for a Democratic Society (MDS). MDS hopes to develop a concurrent program specializing in legal defense

and radical education that will provide knowledge to the new SDSers.

"The original SDS did not have access to elders who made mistakes," says New York City regional organizer and MDS member Tom Good. "If we are careful not to finger wag but only to advise, that knowledge will be an asset."

Finally, members think that restarting SDS provides a tacit connection to the important and comparable battles their predecessors waged. "SDS offers a sense of long continuity of the struggle," says Haber. "Students sometimes don't have much perspective and SDS allows us to build a sense of how it's all connected."

But some are skeptical of SDS's revitalization. While excited by the group's desire to "develop a deep analysis of the root causes of the crises and catastrophes we face," former SDS member and Weatherman dissident (and now University of Illinois at Chicago education professor) Bill Ayers thinks that nostalgia for the first major student movement can be detrimental. "There's nothing more depressing than longing for a ship that's already left the shore," says Ayers.

Isserman is leery as well, arguing that appropriating the name and identity of a group from the past is contradictory for an organization modeling itself after the pioneers of the New Left. "[The first] SDS attempted to re-imagine what it meant to be on the left in America," he says. "They were not trying to turn back to earlier models."

To organize a radical social movement today, SDS will also have to overcome its stigma as a white, male-dominated organization. This issue arose at the convention when the People of Color Caucus produced a statement of constructive criticism to the overwhelmingly white attendees, indicating that each of its members had felt alienated at some point during the weekend.

Lehigh University senior Hannah Behrmann thinks that the group will fail if multiple voices are not heard. "Diversity isn't the greatest at this conference, but it is only the first one," Behrmann says. "It will be very important in the coming months that the organization pays very close attention to the make-up of its leaders."

—Adam Doster

Follow the Prison Money Trail

WHILE NEW MEXICO's landscape may make the state the Land of Enchantment, its rapidly growing rates of incarceration have been utterly disenchanting. What's worse, New Mexico is at the top of the nation's list for privatizing prisons; nearly one-half of the state's prisons and jails are run by corporations.

Supposedly, states turn to private companies to cope better with chronic overcrowding and for low-cost management. However, a closer look suggests a different rationale. A recent report from the Montana-based Institute on Money in State Politics reveals that during the 2002 and 2004 election cycles, private prison companies, directors, executives and lobbyists gave \$3.3 million to candidates and state political parties across 44 states.

According to Edwin Bender, executive director of the Institute on Money in State Politics, private prison companies strongly favor giving to states with the toughest sentencing laws—in es-

appall-o-meter

1.6 If This Oldsmobile's A-Rockin'...

You might say that Norm Coleman Sr. is the beau ideal of the Greatest Generation. Landed at Normandy during the Big One, fought the Battle of the Bulge, came home and built a business empire. He's the kind of American hero any red-blooded son would want as a dad.

At 81, Norm Sr. is still full of vigor, which was on full display in the parking lot of a pizza joint in downtown St. Paul last month, where authorities discovered Coleman engaged in a vehicular fornication with a 38-year-old lady friend. According to the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Coleman and his consort were cited for lewd conduct and indecent exposure.

"I love my father dearly. I do not condone his actions or behavior," commented Norm Jr.—a.k.a. Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.). "He clearly has some issues that need to be dealt with." And how. After all these years, Pops is still fighting the battle of the bulge.

3.7 Just Ewww

Florida GOP Senate hopeful Katherine Harris likes her men like she likes her coffee: "Triple Venti, no fat, no foam, extra hot, with pink sugar."

I'm sorry for that. Actually, I have no idea how Rep. Harris prefers her men. But, according to the *Pensacola (Florida) News Journal*, that is precisely the order she barks at any barista unlucky enough to encounter her skeletal, parti-colored visage across a Starbucks counter. The mercurial, indictment-dodging congresswoman, best known for her yeoman service in George W. Bush's dubious 2000 victory in Florida, has taken to random, vituperative outbursts at her staff, not least (according to TPMuckraker.com) if the campaign rounds take her someplace where there isn't a Starbucks nearby.

3.3 Halliburton Goes Green

What would lead a crusty old lobbyist for the Halliburton Co. to change his heart and start giving money to the Green Party of Luzerne County, Pa.?

Bill Wichterman, of the Beltway powerhouse firm Covington and Burley, isn't saying. What is clear, however, is that his strange gift appears to follow a pattern.

As TPMuckraker.com reveals, other donors to the Pennsylvania Greens include big-time donors to Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Penn.), Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.) and other friends of the earth. In fact, the Muckraker reports, of the \$66,000 the Luzerne County Greens raised in June for a petition drive to put their candidate on November's ballot for senator, exactly \$65,970 was ponied up by conservatives. The other \$30 came from the Green candidate himself.

It's unlikely this has anything to do with the fact that Santorum trails Democratic challenger Bob Casey in the polls. Rather, as one prominent GOP donor to the Greens put it to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*: "I like participatory democracy. Democracy works better when there are a full range of choices before the people and they get to decide what they want."

—Dave Mulcahey

sence, the ones that are more likely to come up with the bodies to fill prison beds. Those states, adds Bender, are also the ones most likely to have passed “three-strikes” laws. Those laws, first passed by Washington state voters in 1993 and then California voters in 1994, quickly swept the nation. They were largely based on “cookie-cutter legislation” pushed by the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), some of whose members come from the ranks of private prison companies.

Florida leads the pack in terms of private prison dollars, with its candidates and political parties receiving almost 20 percent of their total contributions from private prison companies and their affiliates. Florida already has five privately owned and operated prisons, with a sixth on the way. It’s also privatized the bulk of its juvenile detention system. Texas and New Jersey are close behind.

But in Florida, some of the influence peddling finally seems to be backfiring. Florida State Corrections Secretary James McDonough alarmed private prison companies with a comment during an Aug. 2 morning call-in radio show. “I actually think the state is better at running the prisons,” McDonough told an interviewer. His comments followed an internal audit last year by the state’s Department of Management Services, which demonstrated that Florida overpaid private prison operators by \$1.3 million.

Things may no longer be quite as sunny as they once were in Florida for the likes of Nashville, Tenn.-based Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and the former Wackenhut, now known as the GEO Group of Boca Raton, Fla. But with a little bit of *spiel*-tinkering—and a shift of attention to other states—the prison privatizers are likely to keep going.

The key shift, Bender explains, is that “the prison industry has gone from a we-can-save-you-money pitch to an economic-development model pitch.”

In other words, says Bender, “you need [their] prisons for jobs.”

If political donations are any measure, economically challenged and poverty-stricken states like New Mexico are a great target. In this campaign cycle, Democratic Gov. Bill Richardson has already received more contributions from a private prison company than any other politician campaigning for state office in the United States. The Institute of Money

snapshot



MIAMI—Rodolfo Frometa, director of the militant anti-Castro Commandos F-4, shows visitors a photograph of his son, Luis Manuel Frometa Pina. Frometa said that Luis was 19 years old when he was allegedly killed by the Castro government in 1986 after refusing to serve in the Cuban military. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

in State Politics, which traced the donations, reported that GEO has contributed \$42,750 to Richardson since 2005—and another \$8,000 to his running mate, Lt. Gov. Diane Denish.

Another \$30,000 went from GEO to the Richardson-headed Democratic Governors Association this past March. Richardson’s PAC, Moving America Forward, was another prominent recipient of GEO donations. Now, its former head, prominent state capitol lobbyist Joe Velasquez, is a registered lobbyist for GEO Care Inc., a healthcare subsidiary that runs a hospital in New Mexico.

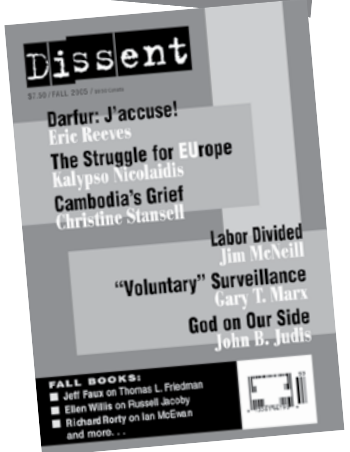
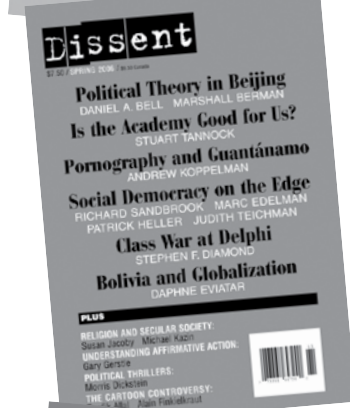
But don’t get the idea that GEO has any particular love for Democrats: \$95,000 from the corporation went to the Republican Governors Association last year alone. What companies like GEO *do* love are the millions of dollars rolling in from lucrative New Mexico contracts to run the Lea County Correctional Facility (operating budget: \$25 million/year), and the Guadalupe County Correctional Facility (\$13 million/year), among others. CCA also owns and operates the state’s only women’s facility in Grants (\$11 million per year).

To make sure that those dollars keep flowing, GEO and CCA have perfected the art of the “very tight revolving door,” says Bender, which involves snapping up former corrections administrators, PAC lobbyists and state officials to serve as consultants to private prison companies.

In fact, the current New Mexico Corrections Department Secretary Joe Williams was once on GEO’s payroll as their warden of the Lea County Correctional Facility. Earlier this year, Williams was placed on unpaid administrative leave after accusations surfaced that he spent state travel and phone funds to pursue a very close relationship with Ann Casey. Casey is a registered lobbyist in New Mexico for Wexford Health Sources, which provides health care for prisoners at Grants, and Aramark, which provides most of the state’s inmate meals. In her non-lobbying hours, it turns out that Casey is also an assistant warden at a state prison in Centralia, Ill.

It appears that even for a prison industry enchanted by public-private partnership, Williams and Casey may have gone too far.

—Silja J.A. Talvi



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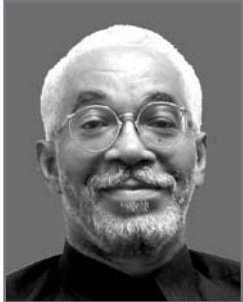
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BY SALIM MUWAKKIL

The Reparations Bandwagon



THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT to gain reparations for the descendents of enslaved Africans was a fast-rolling bandwagon until slowed by events of 9/11. Well, it's accelerating again.

In truth, it's been picking up momentum since Hurricane Katrina blew the cover off this nation's well-camouflaged race/class divide. The distress revealed in that storm's wake moved even President George Bush to urge redress of poverty's

racial disparities. He quickly moved past that urge, but the national conversation continues.

As I see it, the question of reparations for racial slavery and Jim Crow apartheid is one of the nation's most substantive issues. It's also one of the most disparaged.

In fact, anything relating to slavery seems to repel white Americans. Whenever someone floats the idea to issue a governmental apology for abetting racial slavery, the notion is quickly condemned. The last official to suggest such a public apology was former Rep. Tony Hall (D-Ohio), who proposed a bill for an official apology in 1998 and again in 2000. Hall was flooded with angry mail and the legislation languished.

Americans must lose this aversion if we want to effectively confront the nation's widening racial disparities. Slavery's legacy is the primary instigator of those disparities—though its role is hidden to many Americans.

The reparations model provides a conceptual framework to help clarify the crippling affects of that legacy by taking careful account of the structural and intergenerational dimensions of racial advantage and disadvantage. This approach is not concerned with inducing guilt or moral suasion; it defines slavery in terms of unjust enrichment and racially biased distribution of resources.

Many kinds of capital were systematically diverted from blacks to whites through racial slavery and discrimination for more than 15 generations. This produced a wide racial gap in income and wealth distribution, disparities that were then compounded through many generations.

A comprehensive attempt to redress slavery's damage resonates with global efforts to compensate history's victims. Most modern nations now realize that the vagaries of history sometimes produce victims with real injuries: There have been Chilean reparations to the indigenous Mapuche people, Canadian reparations to indigenous Inuits, U.S.

reparations to Japanese-American survivors and various Native nations, German reparations to Israel, and more.

The issue is gaining more advocates. Reparations conventions and forums are occurring across the nation.

A group of heavyweight attorneys (including Harvard's Charles Ogletree and the law firm of the late Johnnie Cochran), formed in 2002 to advocate reparations issues on the judicial front. Several lawsuits are pending and others are anticipated against insurers, railroad corporations and banks seeking reparations for the profits of slavery.

City councils across the country have passed pro-reparations resolutions, including Chicago; Cleveland; Detroit; Washington, D.C.; Baltimore; Los Angeles and Oakland.

Most of these resolutions urge support for a bill annually introduced by Michigan congressman John Conyers

that seeks merely to establish a commission to examine slavery's consequences and recommend remedies.

At least 12 municipalities (including Chicago, which was the first) have passed slavery era disclosure laws, which re-

quire businesses to report on any historical connections to the slave trade. Several mainstream institutions, churches and a number of prominent white Americans also have become reparations advocates. In May 2001, for example, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* published a two-part editorial supporting reparations.

"Slavery and the century of government-sanctioned discrimination that followed were national policies that denied fundamental rights—justice, equality, freedom—to African-Americans. It will take a national effort to answer for that," the paper argued. It was the first time a major publication had come to such a conclusion.

And just last June, Ken Woodley, the winner of the Society of Professional Journalists' 2006 George Mason Award, urged American journalists to support a national apology for slavery and reparations during his acceptance speech. Woodley, the crusading editor of Virginia's *Farmville Herald*, told the audience that the nation needs "a domestic Marshall Plan" providing blacks with education, healthcare and economic development as a form of reparations.

Most recently, a coalition of student groups, reparations groups, social justice advocates and some elected officials (dubbed the "corporate restitutions movement") launched a student loan boycott against banks complicit in slavery, including JP Morgan Chase Manhattan Bank, Bank America, FleetBoston Financial Corp., Bank One and Wachovia.

The bandwagon rolls on. ■

The question of reparations for racial slavery is one of the nation's most substantive issues. It is also one of the most disparaged.

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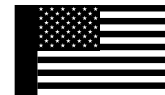
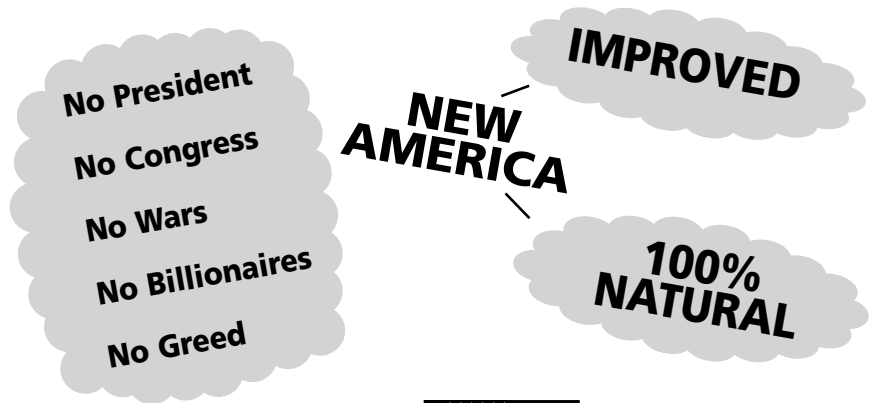
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LAURA S. WASHINGTON

Debunking the '60s with Ayers and Dohrn



They are storied and iconic, America's Numero Uno radical couple. In the '60s, Bernardine Dohrn and Bill Ayers were activists and leaders in Students for a Democratic Society and the Weathermen. Dohrn, now 64, and Ayers, 61, played starring roles as Vietnam War dissenters. When their protests turned violent, they became fugitives from the law.

Forty years later, they are still in the game. I recently invited them to dinner at Yoshi's Café in Chicago's Boys Town. The national convention of Students for a Democratic Society was coming to Chi-Town. So what do these longtime Hyde Parkers think about those good old days, when radicals were radicals and the movement was muscular?

"The 'good old days' is a funny way to think about the left," said Dohrn.

Ayers picked it up. "One of the things that sits very heavy on the progressive impulses today, and young people in particular, is the myth that there was a golden age in resistance, that the '60s was where it was really at."

Today Dohrn is a scholar and director of the Children and Family Justice Center at Northwestern University. Ayers serves as a distinguished professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. They visit college campuses around the nation, where, Ayers says, "We spend a fair amount of time debunking the received wisdom of the '60s."

That "wisdom," he explains, is that resisting the war "was easy to do and everybody did it." It was a hard-fought slog.

Iraq brings its own lessons of protest. He points to a failure of leadership in the run-up to that war. "In March 2003, we participated in the largest antiwar movement in our lives, possibly in history. Now there was a leadership problem in a sense that the leadership said this is the demonstration that will prevent a war.

"It was a wrong thing to say," Ayers argues, "because it didn't help people who participated in that, particularly young people, to analyze the situation, to make sense of it, to make a contribution, and then to continue organizing. It said we'll prevent a war. That war was not preventable."

Forget the Democrats, they say. "The Democratic Party supported the war in Vietnam ..." Dohrn began. Ayers cut in: "Led the war in Vietnam."

"And they've been supporting, and leading this war," Dohrn continued. "I don't look to the Democratic Party. I don't have hope for the Democratic Party. I think the Democratic Party

is bankrupt. And I think the only answer is for us to build an independent, radical movement, and, I mean, the big 'us.'"

To mount a movement, "let's look at history," said Dohrn between bites of her tuna nicoise salad. "Lyndon Johnson was not a civil rights leader; Lyndon Johnson was responding to a civil rights movement. FDR was not a labor leader; FDR was responding to a labor movement. We confuse these things when we think about them today."

Indeed, that's "a great mistake. Lyndon Johnson was the most effective politician of his generation, but it took a movement independent of Lyndon Johnson to get Lyndon Johnson to use that effectiveness for the good."

Still, I asked, aren't progressives putting high hopes in November? Even leading Republicans admit that the Dems are likely to recapture at least one house of Congress.

So what? That's not the point, Ayers says. Electoral politics is a tool to connect causes, like gay rights, disability rights, voting rights, human rights. "That's how you use electoral politics. Not as an end in itself, but as an organizing mechanism.

Our deepest belief, I think, is that we need to connect all these good projects and build the movement. ...we should always be positioning ourselves, thinking, okay, if I'm involved in this next election, how am I positioned to help contribute to building a movement, raising consciousness, making the connections, and that's a real tricky business."

It wasn't so tricky for Ned Lamont. On Aug. 8 Lamont blew out of nowhere to knock off the pro-war U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman in the Connecticut Democratic senate primary. For my money, that vote is a strong predictor of the power war-weary voters will bring to the polls this fall.

Despite their critiques, Ayers and Dohrn are eternal optimists. Over coffee, Dohrn reflected that their activist days can serve as a metaphor for a "candle" that illuminates the past—and the future.

"The issue holding us back today, to me, is the idea that what you do won't make a difference. The elite powers tell us the world is too complicated. They spend a lot of energy fostering despair," she argues.

The candle shows us that "it's not true," Dohrn says. "I don't think it's all the complicated issues of what kind of an economic society we really want and how are we going to deal with globalization and all of that. Those are tremendously complex challenges but they're solvable by human creativity and ingenuity and collective effort."

Stay vigilant. The light will come. ■

'One of the things that sits very heavy on the progressive impulses today is the myth that there was a golden age in resistance.'

Do You Have a Minute for ... ?

How the canvassing industry is burning out progressive youth

BY GREG BLOOM

THERE'S A WORD THAT gets tossed around in canvassing offices to describe people like Christian Miller: "scrappy." That's not because of his skinny frame and sparse, wiry chin-scrabble. Rather, in an industry where the average career lasts two weeks, Miller, 28, canvassed door-to-door throughout Los Angeles for four years.

In the last 30 years, canvassers like Miller have become the most common—if unsung—figures in political activism, going door-to-door or standing on busy street corners to talk to people about various public interest issues. It took Miller a minute to tick through the long list of campaigns for which he'd raised money: solar energy bills, forest protection, Sierra Club, Human Rights Campaign. All were operated by the same company: the Fund for Public Interest Research (commonly known as "the Fund"), a national nonprofit founded by the Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) in 1982. Since then, canvassers for the now-ubiquitous state PIRGs have raised over \$350 million and gathered more than 20 million signatures for causes ranging from environmental protection to gay rights. The Fund holds a near-monopoly on the canvass industry, running 30 to 60 offices each summer, with thousands of canvassers working on dozens of campaigns.

And yet, the canvassers are not members of any particular organization—they are outsourced labor, often making less than minimum wage. It's not surprising that the average career is so short—few of them stick it out.

"The money was enough to live on, and keep me from going further into debt, and I enjoyed the work," Miller says of his remarkable four-year stint. "I was able to experience the benefits immediately—just by going up to people's homes and putting these issues on their radar."

I met Miller in June, near his home. He was wearing a denim jacket sporting classic rock band buttons, looking every bit the unemployed dude living in L.A.—which



They're idealistic now—but will they stay engaged?

JOE RAEDLE/GETTY IMAGES

by that point, he was. Six weeks earlier, the Fund had shuttered his office. It seems he was too scrappy for his employers, particularly in his role as a union steward.

THE L.A. FUND had three offices: a street office, which coordinated canvassers on street corners or at events, a door-to-door office, which coordinated door-knocking canvasses, and a telephone outreach program office, (known as TOP) which handled phone banking. While the door-to-door and TOP offices were in the same building, the street office was across town.

When Miller was hired in the spring of 2002, the street office was closed; he didn't even know one had existed until a year later, when the Fund re-opened it. Some months later, he discovered the reason for the lapse: In early 2002, the street canvassers had requested a petition to unionize from the state labor board. Within a week of the petition's filing, the street office was shut down by the Fund.

"That made some sense of the things I

had seen in the last year-and-a-half," says Miller, who had begun to notice erratic reimbursements, paycheck miscalculations, slippery vacation days and other office policies that the street canvassers' petition had cited. "But I still thought that [unionizing] was a drastic step," he says.

As the years passed, that attitude would change. "I got sick and tired of coming into work and finding that somebody who'd been busting their ass for months was suddenly gone," he says. Miller became a protective uncle to many of the younger canvassers, helping them navigate the Fund's complicated work and pay policies and advising them on how to pace themselves.

By 2005, the L.A. door-to-door office had seven canvassers with more than six months of experience—all of them close friends. "Four of us had been there over a year, we had 11 years between the seven of us, and the average age was 28—which is practically unheard of," Miller says.

It seems that management noticed this unusual group as well. Several of the vet-

eran canvassers reported threats—implicit and explicit—to their job security. “If we wanted to hold onto our jobs,” says Miller, “not unionizing was not an option.”

In spring 2005, the door-to-door office voted to unionize.

MIDWAY INTO OUR conversation, Miller took me to meet Marcy Harris on her day off from work at the Fund’s Telephone Outreach Project. Miller and the other door-to-door canvassers were in touch with the TOP callers throughout the union process, and remain close to this day. Miller and Harris often finish each other’s sentences and expand the other’s stories.

Harris, who started at the Fund in August 2001, has a sweet, soothing voice, and excels at rolling a conversation along—perfect for phone canvassing. “I came in excited to be able to make a difference in the world, really affect change, while being a wage earner and keeping my life modest,” she says. “September 11 strengthened my resolve ... and our directors made us feel like we had to fight harder against the Bush administration.” Harris soon became one of TOP’s all-time earners.

But over time, Harris and her co-workers saw a similar accumulation of “little things” that added up to an untenable working situation. They still liked their jobs, but as the door-to-door canvassers down the hall became increasingly organized, they paid close attention.

So did their managers. During the summer of 2005, the TOP callers were suddenly swarmed with attention from management, and when the door-to-door office successfully voted to unionize, several high-level Fund administrators flew to L.A. for extensive meetings with them. “They were all love and kisses,” says Harris.

This love can be partly explained by the dirty little secret open to everyone in the canvass industry, except perhaps the canvassers themselves: A canvass itself doesn’t raise money. A successful canvass campaign covers its own overhead. The organizations make their real long-term financial gains from the donor rolls that a canvass generates, which can be sold or used in-house.

The Fund executives, who had paid little attention to the door-to-door canvasser’s unionizing attempts, insisted that the caller’s problems did not need to be resolved by a union. But, Harris adds,

“They never did actually ask us what those problems were.”

Staunch managerial pressure against unionizing only pushed the callers closer to it. The TOP office voted to unionize on Sept. 22, 2005.

Miller and Harris say the unionizers were not quite asking for pay raises or better hours. When I asked what specific issues drove them, they either had simple complaints—missed paychecks for extra work days, mishandled reimbursements, no paid breaks allowed during the calling hours—or complicated explications of the Fund’s elaborate quota system and attendance requirements.

“We realized we weren’t going to get rich working here,” Miller says. “We thought, for all the good work our employer does, they need to learn how to treat their employees.”

AFTER THEIR NEAR-UNANIMOUS votes to unionize, the L.A. Fund employees thought they’d done the hardest part. “But the truth is,” Harris says, “that’s when it got really hard. That’s when the waiting began.” And the firing.

At the door-to-door office, union supporters were picked off one by one. At the TOP office, the five most strident union supporters were fired in one night. Both offices had been placed in a “hiring freeze” since the petitions, so staff was dwindling. Despite this and their tanking pay, they were determined to pursue the union contract as far as they could, and filed a number of charges with the NLRB.

The Fund took three months to agree to the first negotiation meeting with the door-to-door office union reps, and then stalled negotiations in a series of almost comical feints that lasted nearly a year. The TOP callers’ union reps called the Fund’s national political director, Wendy Wendlandt, “almost daily,” never to receive a response. (My phone calls to various Fund representatives, including Wendlandt, also went unreturned.)

The deadlock attracted attention in high places. Rep. Hilda Solis (D-Calif.) reprimanded the Fund in a letter dated November 14, 2005, writing “I urge you to reach an agreement with the canvassers and callers employed by your company in an expeditious manner.” But the negotiations never did progress.

On April 28, 2006, almost one year after its staff filed for a union petition, the L.A. door-to-door office, one of the top

grossing offices in the nation, was shut down and its two remaining employees let go.

After eleven months on a hiring freeze, the L.A. TOP office was shut down in August 2006. The staff’s charges were ultimately dropped by the NLRB, but the state labor commission has found in the callers’ favor, ordering the Fund to compensate all TOP employees for five years’ (and several thousand dollars) worth of unpaid workday breaks.

“We’ve all come to realize,” Miller says, “that our nation’s labor laws are not designed to protect employees from employers who resort to measures as self-destructive as those the Fund has taken.”

MILLER AND HARRIS’ personal stories—of idealism beset by frustration and turned to disillusionment, and of “mysterious firings” and “staff purges”—are wholly typical of the many accounts recorded in *Activism, Inc.*, a new book by Dana Fisher, a sociology professor at Columbia University. Fisher interviewed hundreds of canvassers over a period of several years, with the permission of an organization that in her work goes under the pseudonym, “the People’s Project.” This organization is acknowledged to be one of the largest canvassing organizations in the United States.

Fisher found that canvassing experience severely limits the entry points for young people looking for a career in social justice. According to Fisher, the canvass industry yields a remarkably “small percentage [of canvassers who find] other work in politics after canvassing.” Far more often these young people go to the private sector. (This summer, Miller took a job with a solar panel installation company.) *Activism, Inc.* suggests that rather than a breeding ground for new generations of grassroots activism, the industry is eating the left’s young.

But who can change this system? The Fund has plenty of clients, and the clients get what they want—cheap lists of new donors. It’s the canvassers themselves who provide that value, through the investment of their youthful energy and political passion. In Los Angeles, this group was trying to ensure that their investment brought sound returns. Can we say the same for progressive politics? ■

GREG BLOOM is a former canvasser currently writing in Miami.

BIGGER THA

A look at the state of black political leadership

BY GLEN FORD

IT'S BIGGER!" ROARED T.J. Crawford. "It's bigger!" the crowd shouted back, in traditional call-and-response fashion. "It's bigger than hip hop!"

Crawford, chairman of the National Hip Hop Political Convention (NHHPC), deployed the hook of a song by hip hop's iconic "conscious" group, dead prez, to bring home the point: Members of what marketers have labeled the "hip-hop generation" are concerned with much more than just nodding their heads to the beat. Politics is more important—bigger!—than music for activists who have felt swept aside and demobilized by black elders whose outlook was forged in the crucible of civil rights organizing. These young crews, along with the elders who hang with them on political issues, aim to seize leadership of what's left of the movement—although they're not quite sure how to do it.

Hip-hop politics emerged from the musical movement launched in the South Bronx in the late '70s—itsself a reaction to the unfinished business, the arrested development, of black politics. The late-'60s demise of segregation allowed black professionals to escape the inner city, to climb corporate ladders and achieve elected offices. However, budding corporate executives and elected officials have little use for mass movements, except on election days or when corporate careers are threatened by institutional racism. As a class, these "New Negroes" left the rest of the African American population still locked in the ghetto, to their own devices.

"The birth of hip hop, the environment, grew out of the early '70s, police

brutality, poverty, unemployment—all these social ills that were affecting marginalized and oppressed people," says Angelica Salazar, an ethnic studies major at University of California, Berkeley, and an activist in the Coalition for Black-Brown Unity and the NHHPC movement. "One of the reasons that hip hop has been so globally successful—so critical in reaching our people and crossing borders—is that every marginalized people who have been oppressed and put into 'reservations' can relate to that experience. You are trying to recreate what was stolen from you."

Looking to put black politics back on track, 4,000 people from across the nation, mostly but not entirely African American, flocked to multiple venues on Chicago's South Side for the convention. They hoped to build on the work of the first NHHPC, which took place in Newark, New Jersey in 2004.

The Chicago affair, like its Newark predecessor, strained to tackle the two fundamental questions that are constantly posed to younger blacks: Is there a generational divide among African American activists, or are the fissures more complicated? And how can the cultural force of hip hop be directed to affect social change?

The old school

Despite the gains that African Americans have made since segregation, social change is still very much needed. But a mass black movement has floundered. According to NAACP chairman Julian Bond, there were 10,000 separate anti-racist actions in the year 1963 alone. In the current era, one is hard-pressed to name a significant anti-racist demonstration in any given year.

While the older generation of civil

AN HIP HOP

rights activists is marching on, they're no longer at the front of the action. Last year, 20,000 braved Atlanta's August heat to demand reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act in a march organized by the NAACP, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, black churches and civic groups, and a strong union contingent. But considerably less than half the participants could reasonably be called youthful. "It was a significantly older crowd," says Bruce Dixon, Atlanta-based editor of BlackCommentator.com (of which I am executive editor) and longtime activist. "Back in the days when a real movement existed, the crowd would have been nine-tenths youth."

On the speakers' platform, among a cast that included Rev. Jesse Jackson, Harry Belafonte, and U.S. Reps. John Lewis (D-Ga.) and Maxine Waters (D-Calif.), the youngest notables were singer Stevie Wonder, age 55, and TV's Judge Greg Mathis, 45.

Similar demographics dominated the throng that attended the Millions More rally on Washington's Capitol Mall in October 2005. The seemingly endless list of speakers, although representing virtually every political tendency in Black America, included very few below age 50—and these tended to be entertainers. Despite the presence of a vocal Howard University contingent, the atmosphere was more picnic-like than militant—a Saturday gathering of mainly middle-aged folks.

Clearly, black movement politics has entered the geriatric stage—if, indeed, anything worthy of the term "movement" still exists.

The NAACP's youth and college councils number about 100,000 people—one-fifth of the claimed half-million overall membership of the only real mass organization in Black America. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference is no longer a mass orga-

nization, and has nothing like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (defunct since 1970) under its umbrella. The National Urban League has never been a mass grouping. Operation PUSH/Rainbow Coalition is Rev. Jackson's vehicle, and functions as he wishes. PUSH has not developed an independent youth group, or anything else independent of Rev. Jackson.

All too often, critics dismiss the lack of younger activists at the podium as a function of a black "generational divide." Could it be that simple?

Divided we fall

Not according to Rev. Lennox Yearwood, the 36-year-old head of the D.C.-based Hip Hop Caucus. Instead of a generational schism, he sees a "cultural and geographic divide" that developed after the death of Jim Crow provided an opening for spatial and economic mobility to those blacks positioned to take advantage of it.

Traditional black organizations were most concerned with servicing the goals of these aspiring populations, according to Rev. Yearwood. "The church and other institutions have gone from being usable institutions for the community to being institutionalized"—upholding rather than rattling the status quo. In contrast, he says, "Hip hop emerges out of the Black Power Movement, as a voice for the urban community."

Yearwood has been involved in an extraordinary range of political activities under the hip-hop umbrella, from Russell Simmons' Hip-Hop Summit Action Network to the AFL-CIO-affiliated Hip Hop Voices to Hip Hop U.N., "a coalition of all the hip-hop political organizations throughout the world." His organization describes itself as "a national and international coalition of hip hop, pop-culture, social and political organizations, community-based organizations, youth leadership organizations, and individu-



als who believe in the collective power of persons born after 1964.”

In Jersey City, N.J., 25-year-old Hassan Salaam helps public school kids with their homework and teaches chess to youngsters through a National Urban League program. He’s also a hip-hop activist with the Grassroots Artist Movement, which secures healthcare services for artists. Salaam is confident that his cadre of artists is in tune with the black political/cultural continuum.

“There’s no difference to me,” says Salaam, who equates Grandmaster Flash’s classic “The Message” with the works of Duke Ellington and John Coltrane. “Within hip hop, we’re talking about the same things the older people talk about.”

“There is a generational divide, but it’s not the primary problem,” agrees Troy Nkrumah. A lawyer under 30, he assists political prisoners and radical youth organizations in Las Vegas, after doing similar work in the San Francisco Bay area. From Nkrumah’s perspective, it is the political timidity of established black leaders that has led to the current generational tensions. “The civil rights folks got into comfortable positions,” said Nkrumah. “In their minds, they thought they were still down with the movement, but they resisted the radicalism of the young.”

If the cutoff date for the hip-hop generation is a birthday in 1964, then a majority of black people now belong to it, Nkrumah told me. “Hip hop grows every year,” he continues. “Until it dies out, it will grow. Hip hop is not just music,

dancing, graffiti—it’s activism.”

Angela Woodson, the 36-year-old co-chair of the Newark convention, presents a starker view of the youth cultural scene. “There are three worlds of hip hop. There’s the corporate world, the political world—and the stupid world.”

That “stupid world” grew out of the gangsta rap genre that corporate record labels have been pushing since the early ’90s. The corporatization and segmentation of black music has been crucial in driving a wedge between generations.

“Me and my parents listened to the same radio station: WBLS-FM—that was the campfire,” says New York native and Bay Area radio personality Davey D, who is not yet 40. “Now the same company uses one station to target one age group, another station to target the other. If you look at the types of venues where wisdom was dispersed, you don’t have elders talking to younger people.”

This generation lives in a different media world than their elders—one stripped of relevance. The content of corporate-owned stations is dumbed down and apolitical. During the mass demonstrations for immigrant rights in Los Angeles, KKBT-FM (“The Beat”) completely ignored one million people in the streets. “It was similar to the Million Man March right on their doorstep, yet to KKBT and its listeners, it didn’t exist,” says Davey D.

So, culture, class issues, consumerism and varying degrees of complacency all divide African Americans, as much if not more than generational differences.

In fact, to reduce the fragmentation of black politics into a generation gap is to play into the hands of the right. Republicans have shown that it can play the youth game as well as the left—better, because they have more money.

Take the victory of Newark’s new African-American mayor, Cory Booker, who was an obscure, 33-year-old, one-term Newark city councilman when he starred at a power luncheon at the Manhattan Institute, the right-wing outfit that specializes in media influence, in 2000. Booker had earlier hooked up with the Bradley and Walton Family (Wal-Mart) Foundations, to become a director of their political invention, the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO)—a pro-school vouchers group. After losing the 2002 election, Booker raised \$6.1 million for another run, garnering universal corporate media endorsements. He based his campaign on the need for “new blood” and criticisms of the “tired civil-rights generation.”

All together now

Seeking change, young and old came together at both the 2004 NHHPC and the one that took place this year in Chicago’s historic Bronzeville neighborhood.

The oldest speaker at the first day’s Intergenerational Dialogue, Illinois Secretary of Human Services Dr. Carol Adams, was possibly the most militant of “The Movement Continues” panel participants. “To think that we have to begin our revolution again every generation is sad, indeed,” said the sixtyish black civil servant. The crowd exploded in cheers.

NHHPC activists were quick to distinguish themselves from the rich entrepreneurs and poseurs who claim to be the voice of a younger generation.

“I don’t know that I need Fat Joe [an Afro-Puerto Rican/Bronx rapper] to be the next black leader, the next Malcolm X,” said Cedric Shine, a recent graduate from Temple University who works for the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank in Washington, D.C. “I don’t think me and P-Diddy are going to have similar goals in life.”

Twenty-seven-year-old Adrienne Marie Brown was a key player in the 2004 NHHPC as well as an operative in that year’s Democratic election campaign. Brown trained voter organizations and created voter guides in Ohio, and also worked through the League of Pissed Off Voters, whose “mission is to engage pissed off 17



Rev. Jesse Jackson, greets Rev. Joseph Lowry, co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, before the 2005 Keep the Vote Alive March and Rally in Atlanta.

BARRY WILLIAMS/GETTY IMAGES

to 35-year-olds in the democratic process to build a progressive governing majority in our lifetime."

Brown believes the younger black demographics are grouped in three political sections: youth activists in the civil rights movement, a hip-hop movement heavily influenced by "angry" black music, and the young middle class.

Young civil rights activists working

Clemente pointed out, "We have not decided what type of organization we want to be." She is not optimistic that her cohort can repair the damage that has been done. "There was a complete failure of black leadership, and there's only so much the hip-hop generation can do."

NHHPC chairman Crawford conceded the amorphous nature of the organization—the undefined relationships

would-be organizers to "set up tables at barber shops and nightclubs. Hit every community event that you can. Work with black radio and print media to achieve high visibility. The people must know who you are, and that you are with and among them."

Listening to such speakers, it becomes plain that little has changed over the decades except that the rightist and racist

The fragmentation of black politics spells disaster, not just for African Americans, but for progressives of all hues. More nuts and bolts base-building is in order.

in traditional organizations are blocked from taking power by an entrenched leadership, says Brown. The group she calls the "young middle class" are comfortable and complacent. "Most black middle-class young people—a huge arena—don't identify as hip hop or as civil rights. They just want to boogie. They don't want to mess anything up." Black leadership, for this cohort, is whatever power and media say it is. "They look at black leadership and see people like Condoleezza Rice. We in the hip-hop movement don't see Condoleezza Rice as evidence of progress," Brown says.

Brown is now executive director of the Ruckus Society, which "provides environmental, human rights, and social justice organizers with the tools, training, and support needed to achieve their goals." Her mission? To spark a mass movement.

Limitations in the movement

But can hip-hop politics provide a new way in the face of corporatization and complacency? Reviews are mixed.

Some were not happy with the organizers of this year's NHHPC. The 2004 Newark document set forth practical, progressive positions on education, economic justice, criminal justice, health and wellness, and human rights, but "somehow, in 2004, gender issues were not on the agenda," said Nkrumah, the Las Vegas-based human rights lawyer. Organizers in Chicago rushed to gather suggestions for positions on "womanism," the environment, gentrification, media, and a broader stance on "all forms of economic oppression, local or global."

However, it remained unclear what force the old or newly-adopted items would have since, as 2004 organizer Rosa

between the national steering committee, the local organizing committees, and the 14 separate organizations to which many of the key organizers belong. "This agenda expresses the political ambition of the hip-hop community," says Crawford.

A few attendees offered innovative approaches. Nimco Ahmad, an organizer from Milwaukee who was among the '04 convention leadership, uses sophisticated surveys to identify supporters of progressive candidates based on previous voting patterns. Volunteers are developed from these areas, and then further outreach work is conducted among groups of "disenfranchised communities" that tend to vote less frequently. "Those are your new base," says Ahmad.

Campaign Against Violence organizer C.J. Jenkins uses similar techniques to stop inner-city violence. "First, we create a grid showing the most violent neighborhoods" says Jenkins. Then they elicit neighborhood opinions about the sources of violence, and designate block captains to keep watch on local activities. Jenkins urged

enemy has regrouped and become more powerful, while progressive forces have often failed to do the basics of political organizing.

The fragmentation of black politics spells disaster, not just for African Americans, but for progressives of all hues. Last year, the Bay Area Center for Voting Research found that the nation's most "liberal" cities by voting patterns are also the blackest. The "left" lives in Detroit, Gary, Washington D.C., Oakland, Newark—all the major African-American urban centers.

The hip-hop activists who have been set in motion are a conscious extension of the movement that came before. Their fate is to work on the unfinished business of the previous struggle—plus the mounting threats of gentrification, mass black incarceration and raging imperialism. It's a task that is indeed "bigger than hip hop." ■

GLEN FORD is executive editor of *BlackCommentator.com*. He is also the former owner and host of *Rap It Up*, the first nationally syndicated radio Hip Hop music show.

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The Good War on Terror

How the Greatest Generation helped pave the road to Baghdad

BY CHRISTOPHER HAYES

ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001, George W. Bush wrote the following impression in his diary: “The Pearl Harbor of the 21st century took place today.” He wasn’t alone in this assessment. In the days after the attacks, editorialists, pundits and citizens reached with impressive unanimity for this single historical precedent. The Sept. 12 *New York Times* alone contained 13 articles mentioning Pearl Harbor.

Five years after 9/11 we are still living with the legacy of this hastily drawn analogy. Whatever the natural similarities between December 7, 1941, and September 11, 2001, the association of the two has led us to convert—first in rhetoric, later in fact—a battle against a small band of clever, murderous fundamentalists into a worldwide war of epic scale.

The toll has been steep: more than \$1 trillion will be spent for the ongoing combat and occupation in Afghanistan and Iraq; 2,900 dead American soldiers, 20,000 wounded, and somewhere between 50,000 to 150,000 dead Iraqi and Afghan civilians. We have detained hundreds of “enemy combatants” in Guantánamo, denying them due process, and until recently, habeas corpus. The terms “black sites” and “extraordinary rendition” have entered our lexicon, respective euphemisms for secret U.S. prisons abroad where torture occurs and for the practice of transferring prisoners to other countries that employ

torture. Polls show international opinion of the United States at record lows.

How did we get here?

The best place to look for the answer is not in the days after the attacks, but in the years before. Examining the cultural mood of the late ’90s allows us to separate the natural reaction to a national trauma from any underlying predispositions. During that period, the country was in the grip of a strange, prolonged obsession with World War II and the generation that had fought it.

The pining for the glory days of the Good War has now been largely forgotten, but to sift through the cultural detritus of that era is to discover a deep longing for the kind of epic struggle the War on Terror would later provide. The standard view of 9/11 is that it “changed everything.” But in its rhetoric and symbolism, the WWII nostalgia laid the conceptual groundwork for what was to come—the strange brew of nationalism, militarism and maudlin sentimentality that constitutes post-9/11 culture.

To fully understand what has gone wrong since 9/11, it is necessary to rewind the tape to that moment just before.

Before the storm

The late ’90s was a strange time in American history. With the Cold War over, the country faced no overarching enemy for the first time in decades. The United States seemed possessed of no

greater national purpose than making money through IPOs and an ever-expanding Dow. Our politics were dominated by the petty and trivial: from school uniforms to the president’s sex life.

Memories of former glory rushed in to fill this vacuum. In 1994, the 50th anniversary of D-Day prompted both an NBC special commemoration hosted by Tom Brokaw and the publication of historian Stephen Ambrose’s *D-Day June 6, 1994: The Climactic Battle of World War II*, which would go on to sell 800,000 copies. The book attracted the attention of Steven Spielberg—a man with a preternatural sense of the zeitgeist—who would launch the pop cultural phenomenon in all its excess in 1998 with *Saving Private Ryan*, which opened to rave reviews and grossed \$433 million.

An explosion of associated products came on the heels of *Saving Private Ryan*’s commercial success: Brokaw’s three “Greatest Generation” books (which sold 5 million copies), a book about veterans of the Pacific Theater called *Flags of Our Fathers* (a film adaptation produced by Spielberg and directed by Clint Eastwood will be released this fall), and a clunking Bruce Willis vehicle called *Hart’s War*. With such an irresistible financial incentive, Ambrose would generate 10 more books between 1994 and 2001, including a distilled history of the war for “young readers” called *The Good Fight*. Tom Hanks, who starred in *Saving Private Ryan*, became a kind of



WWII commemoration crusader, cutting a series of radio ads that advocated for a World War II memorial to be built on the Mall. After a seven-year-campaign, it was dedicated in 2004.

Nostalgia quickly descended into kitsch: In 1999, *People* named "The World War II Soldier" one of its "25 Most Intriguing People," right next to Ricky Martin and Ashley Judd. But unlike so many pop culture phenomena, this one had legs, extending into the new millennium when Hollywood released the summer blockbuster *Pearl Harbor* in May 2001. Months later, HBO broadcast with great fanfare "Band of Brothers," a miniseries based on Ambrose's eponymous book about the exploits of the famed "E Company" as it fought its way across Europe. Produced by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg, the series debuted on Sept. 9, 2001.

The flag of our fathers

Explaining why he made *Saving Private Ryan*, Steven Spielberg told an interviewer, "The most important thing about this picture is that I got to make a movie about a time that my dad flourished in." During the Vietnam War, Spielberg explained, he resented people like his father who were proud to be American and dis-

played the flag. "Only when I became older did I begin to understand my dad's generation," Spielberg said. "I went from resenting the American flag to thanking it."

That American flag receives loving treatment in *Saving Private Ryan's* opening moments, when it stiffly, proudly flutters across the screen. In fact, the flag, which had become a legendary culture war symbol after being torched during Vietnam protests, enjoys an earnest revival throughout the literature of the WWII nostalgia. In *Flags of Our Fathers*, James Bradley writes that the image of his father and his fellow soldiers raising the flag at Iwo Jima "transported many thousands of anxious, grieving, and war-weary Americans into a radiant state of mind: a kind of sacred realm, where

faith, patriotism, mythic history, and the simple capacity to hope intermingled."

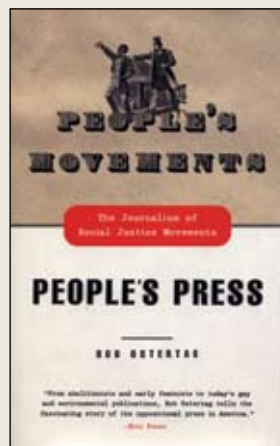
In *The Greatest Generation*, Brokaw also celebrates this simple, old-fashioned patriotism. "They love life and love their country," Brokaw writes of his subjects, before adding, "and they are not ashamed to say just that."

"If there's a common lament of this generation," he notes later, it is "where is the old-fashioned patriotism that got them through so much heartache and sacrifice?"

It's not just patriotism, though, that distinguishes "the Greatest Generation any society has ever produced." According to Brokaw, members of it share "a sense of duty to their country" that is not "much in fashion anymore." Due to the

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“military training and discipline” they received during the war, they are models of self-control, and complain that, “the way you’re told to raise your kids now, there’s no discipline.” They are allergic to conspicuous consumption, humble and stoic, “refusing to talk about [the war] unless questioned and then only reluctantly.” They are “self-sufficient,” and characterized by “a sense of personal responsibility and a commitment to honesty.”

If this litany of values seems familiar, it’s because in the oppositional vocabulary of the culture war, they are virtues that, like the flag itself, conservatives claim as their own. In conservative mythology, it was the baby boomers—undisciplined, self-indulgent, unpatriotic—who unmoored the country from the traditional values of their forebears. Because the right has spent the better part of three decades pillorying the cultural legacy of the ’60s, it’s impossible for any work that celebrates the WWII generation not to serve a tacit culture war function.

Even before 9/11, Karl Rove understood this all too well. In his essay “Operation Enduring Analogy: World War II, the War on Terror and the Uses of Historical Memory,” David Hoogland Noon, a history professor at the University of Alaska, Southeast, writes that even in his first campaign George W. Bush “consistently referenced World War II not simply to justify his own policy aims, but more importantly as a cultural project as well as an ongoing gesture of self-making,” positioning himself as “an heir to the reputed greatest

generation of American leaders.”

“In the world of our fathers, we have seen how America should conduct itself,” Bush said in a 1999 speech at the Citadel. Now, the moment had come “to show that a new generation can renew America’s purpose.” Throughout both his campaigns, Bush would go out of his way to criticize the dominant ethos of “If it feels good, do it,” instead calling for a “culture in which each of us understands we’re responsible for the decisions we make.”

Bush’s allusions to the Greatest Generation were so persistent that the press came to see him—a Boomer child of privilege known for his youthful carousing—as a kind of throwback. Reporting on Bush’s first inaugural address, *Newsweek’s* Evan Thomas wrote that “Bush wants the White House to recover some of its dignity, to rise above baby-boomer self-indulgence and aspire to the order and self-discipline prized by the Greatest Generation.”

After 9/11 it seemed as if the entire country was ready to adopt the Greatest Generation values that Bush had so assiduously claimed as his own. We celebrated the manly heroism of the cops and firefighters who sacrificed their lives to save people. Editorials proclaimed the “death of irony” and a return to earnest patriotism. The flag that Spielberg had once resented and later come to love seemingly now hung from every home.

Bush, then, emerged as a kind of prophet. Because his image-makers had already portrayed him as having abandoned Boomer frivolity for Greatest Generation

discipline, he seemed the natural choice to lead the country through its trials. In 2002, after congressional Democrats suffered losses in the mid-terms despite heavy campaigning from Bill Clinton, *Time’s* Margaret Carlson concluded this was due to a post 9/11 “shift in the culture,” in which “Clinton-era values are no longer America’s.”

“Though a baby boomer,” Carlson observed, “Bush rejects the instant-gratification ethic embraced by Clinton, the nation’s first baby boomer President. ... [Bush] often laments not being one of the Greatest Generation he so admires. ... Whereas Clinton liked going on MTV with 18-year-olds, Bush urges them and their parents to return to an ‘era of responsibility.’”

The new militarism

It is impossible to separate the values celebrated in the Greatest Generation nostalgia from the experience of war itself, for the soldiers’ experiences formed the core of the entire liturgy.

Stephen Ambrose, whose work serves as the foundation for the canon, documents the minutest details of soldiers’ battle experience, expressing “awe” at what they were able to endure. When Ambrose’s account was dramatized in *Saving Private Ryan*, critics hailed its unvarnished look at the mayhem of battle. Janet Maslin’s review in the *New York Times* summed up the consensus. While “the combat film has disintegrated into a showcase for swag, cynicism, obscenely overblown violence and hollow, self-serving victories,” she wrote, Spielberg’s film “simply looks at war as if war had not been looked at before.” This description suffices for the film’s opening sequence, but when applied to the film’s overall meaning, it obscures much more than it reveals.

In the film, a small company of American soldiers manages to survive the D-Day invasion, and are then led by their commander, John Miller (Tom Hanks), on a quest to find Private Ryan. Ryan’s three brothers have, unbeknownst to him, all recently died in combat, and U.S. General Command has decided to find the lone surviving Ryan boy and get him home to his grieving mother. Miller and his company, comprising a charmingly diverse assemblage of white guys, wander the French countryside still dotted with Germans, looking for the elusive private, who had parachuted ahead with the airborne.



U.S. Marines salute behind memorials to their fallen comrades at a service memorializing those killed in Iraq.

DAVID MCNEW/GETTY IMAGES

But the film's real message revolves not around Ryan, but Cpl. Timothy Upham. We first meet Upham when Miller goes to fetch him from his desk where he is poring over maps and translating communiqués from French and German. Young and wispy, with hair brushing his upper lip, Upham is a translator, not a fighter: He hasn't fired a gun since basic training and wants to take his typewriter with him. He quickly earns the unit's ire by annoyingly chatting everyone up and quoting books and poetry.

At one point, after engaging a German tank that manages to kill one of their own men, the American soldiers capture the lone surviving German and force him to dig his own grave before they execute him. As the German pathetically mutters nonsensical English phrases, Upham objects to Miller. "Captain, this isn't right," he says, "You know this. He's a prisoner, he surrendered. He surrendered, sir." Miller is skeptical, but ultimately swayed. He blindfolds the German and tells him to walk 1,000 paces and then turn himself in to the first American soldiers he sees. The other men grumble.

It's not the last we see of the German. In the film's climatic battle, as the Americans try to hold a bridge under a heavy German attack, this same former prisoner returns to shoot and kill Captain Miller. Meanwhile, during the battle, Upham is paralyzed by a fear so total that, as his Jewish comrade wrestles hand-to-hand with a menacing Nazi, he can only cower in the stairwell below, crying as the Nazi plunges a knife in the Jewish soldier's chest.

The message is clear. In the great struggle for the future of the free world, the intellectual cannot be trusted. His concern for the laws of war means he is weak and cowardly, and will contribute to defeat. Only the true soldier can win the war. This is the ethos of the Cult of the Soldier, which would come to entirely dominate our politics in the years to follow.

"For it has been said so truthfully that it is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us the freedom of the press," Zell Miller boomed during his keynote speech at the 2004 Republican National Convention. "It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the agitator, who has given us the freedom to protest. It is the soldier who salutes the flag, serves beneath the flag, whose coffin is draped by the flag who gives that protester the freedom he

abuses to burn that flag."

The Cult of the Soldier wasn't confined solely to the Republican Party. Just a month earlier, the Democratic National Convention had been converted into a four-day military pageant, with home movies of John Kerry as a young soldier, his Swift Boat crew assembled on stage on the convention's final night, and the nominee opening his acceptance speech with a stiff salute and the words, "John

Making WWII the touchstone for martial combat allowed the militarists we politely call "neoconservatives" to imbue all wars with the same moral purpose.

Kerry, reporting for duty."

It didn't work. Whatever points Kerry scored from his military valor were negated by ceaseless attacks on his character: from the incessant charge of flip-flopping to the slander of the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth. More devastatingly, Kerry's personal story didn't fit the idealized notion of honorable, dutiful, courageous combat, because after his service he returned home to question the war's purpose and the war crimes of his fellow soldiers.

If he played Miller in the war's first act, he played Upham in its second.

But even without the particulars of Kerry's own moral journey, it was still destined to fail. Reality can't compete with the power of these established symbols. To reinforce the Cult of the Soldier is to reinforce the same set of oppositional culture war clichés that undergird our current political discourse. You're either with the war or you are against the troops.

Not everyone was so naive as to miss this. Even before 9/11, historian Howard Zinn, himself a WWII bombardier, wrote in *The Progressive* that he refused to celebrate the Greatest Generation "because in doing so we are celebrating courage and sacrifice in the cause of war. And we are miseducating the young to believe that military heroism is the noblest form of heroism. ... Indeed, the current infatuation with World War II prepares us—innocently on the part of some, deliberately on the part of others—for more war, more military adventures, more attempts to emulate the military heroes of the past."

The experience of Vietnam had largely succeeded in cleansing Americans of

whatever romantic notions of military heroism they may have once held dear. For neoconservatives, our collective suspicion of war was a weak-kneed impediment to fulfilling our imperial calling, a national illness they diagnosed as "Vietnam syndrome." Searching for a cure took up no small amount of conservative energy, but it was the centrists and liberals who produced the WWII nostalgia who ultimately provided it.

It is a grand irony that Spielberg claimed repeatedly that his entire motivation behind making *Saving Private Ryan* was to deconstruct the simplified version of WWII that Americans had come to accept. "All wars," he said in a typical interview, are "chambers of horrors." And that's certainly true of the film's opening and of the gruesome descriptions in Ambrose's books and Brokaw's recounting. But what emerges from these works is a picture of war as a chamber of *physical* horrors—torn limbs, exposed viscera, muck, blood. Absent completely are the *moral* horrors of combat, the horror of taking a life, of feeling the killer within. There's a good deal of evidence that suggests the most traumatic experience of war isn't being the target of violence, but rather the agent. A 1994 study of post-traumatic stress in veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam found that "responsibility for killing another human being is the single most pervasive, traumatic experience of war."

So when, as Spielberg and Brokaw both point out, WWII veterans refuse to say they are heroes, it may not be due to any generational humility, but rather because, in their view, they really *aren't* heroes. Taking another human life may sometimes be necessary, but it is rarely, if ever, heroic.

In fact, the more recent Greatest Generation texts by and large display far less moral nuance than the classic World War II literature produced by the men who fought in it. In *Catch-22*, to name just one example, there is no glory or moral clarity, only surreal, horrific absurdity. At one point, as Yossarian is about to embark on

read the latest underground classic

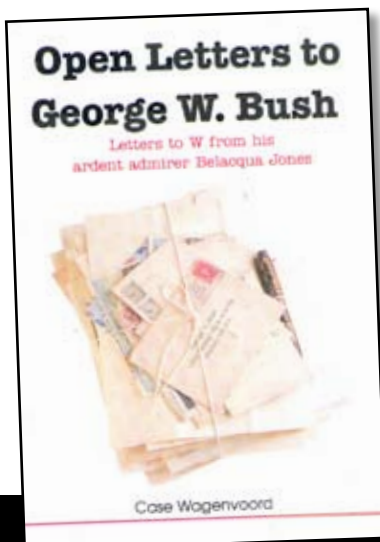
Imagine Karl Rove on methamphetamine and you have Bush's shadow advisor, Belacqua Jones. Belacqua peppers the president with daily letters of encouragement and advice in which:

- He praises the president's Eternal War of the Empty Policy
- He tells the president how to shoot Jesus full of theological steroids
- He mourns the martyrdom of St. Thomas De Lay

This is a must read for those seeking a dark vision of American politics and life seen through the cracked lens of substance abuse and a Neocon ideology run amok.

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a bombing run, he asks his comrades, "Do you guys realize, we are going to bomb a city that has no military targets, no railroads, no industries, only people?"

The WWII that emerges from accounts of the late '90s is one scrubbed clean of its moral complexity. There is no mention of American big business financing the build-up of the Nazi war machine, no America First campaign determined not to shed American blood for European Jews, no firebombing of civilians in Dresden. The war was difficult, yes, and bloody, but pure and just: a battle, not to put too fine a point on it, between good and evil.

In the hands of the men who would come to dominate American military policy in the Bush administration, this Manichean framework was a useful template to apply indiscriminately to any and all of the military confrontations they had long sought. To the neocons and some breakaway lefties, al-Qaeda members are "Islamofascists," 21st century heirs to the murderous ideologies of Nazism, fascism and totalitarianism. It is always Munich 1938, every dictator is a "tyrant," and anyone opposed to a state of perpetual war is guilty of "appeasement."

"In the 20th century, some chose to appease murderous dictators, whose threats were allowed to grow into genocide and global war," Bush said in a March 17, 2003, address that would herald the beginning of the bombing of Iraq. "In this century, when evil men plot chemical, biological and nuclear terror, a policy of appeasement could bring destruction of a kind never before seen on this earth."

Making WWII the touchstone for martial combat allowed the militarists we politely call "neoconservatives" to imbue all wars with the same moral purpose. The Greatest Generation nostalgia succeeded in helping to subtly shift the burden of proof, such that wars were presumed innocent and righteous, as opposed to the far more sane position that war is guilty until proven innocent.

If there's a single guiding ethos for the Bush's administration's foreign policy, it is this: that contrary to the age-old insight about the "fog of war," war brings moral clarity even as it clouds the senses. In the first days of the escalating missile and rocket strikes between Israel and Hezbollah, Dan Bartlett, a White House aide, explained that "[The president] mourns the loss of every life. Yet out of this tragic development, he believes a moment of

clarity has arrived."

Through the crucible of battle, evil and good announce themselves. In the absence of violence, they remain hidden.

The perils of unity

The people who produced the books and movies that would come to define WWII nostalgia were by no means reactionaries. Spielberg is famously liberal, Brokaw widely rumored to be a Democrat, and Ambrose an establishment centrist who in 1995 penned an op-ed calling for Colin Powell to run for president.

So whatever the nationalistic and militaristic effects of the symbolic vocabulary they built, war and patriotism weren't the primary aims. No, what seems to motivate the soft-focus reflections on the '40s is the unparalleled experience of unity that the Good War created. "The one time the nation got together was World War II," says Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) in *The Greatest Generation*. "We stood as one. We spoke as one. We clenched our fists as one."

By appealing to an era of broad national consensus, Brokaw, Spielberg and Ambrose tapped a popular urge to rise above the social striations and fissures of post-'60s upheavals. After 30 years of culture war, they were calling for a truce. And as the initial reaction to 9/11 showed, Americans were ready for one.

On the 60th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, with the country still just three months removed from the 9/11 attacks, George W. Bush invoked, as he would many times in the years that followed, the unwavering unity America had displayed during World War II. "During four years of war," he said, "no one doubted the rightness of our cause; no one wavered in the quest of victory."

A state in which "no one doubts the rightness" of its cause is a state in which politics has ceased to exist. In retrospect, that is what the nation sought in the waning days of the 20th century. Crowding into theatres to watch *Saving Private Ryan*, curling up to read *The Greatest Generation*, Americans were longing for something greater, more noble and less petty than mere politics. But mere politics turns out to be the only bulwark we have against the collective madness that war engenders. When politics dies, when it is suffocated underneath the warm blanket of patriotic consensus, the conscience of the republic dies along with it. ■

Let's Be Realists, Let's Demand the Impossible!

Why pragmatic politics are doomed to fail in the Middle East

BY SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

ONE OF THE MOST repulsive moments of the present Middle East conflict occurred after one of Hezbollah's rockets killed two Israeli-Arab children: Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah pointedly apologized *only* for these deaths, thus making it clear that there is nothing to regret in the deaths of Israeli civilians. Doesn't this make clear the ethical difference between Hezbollah and the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), which always regret civilian casualties among the Lebanese, perceiving them as a necessary evil?

However, upon a closer look, this clear opposition gets blurred. The IDF always emphasize how Hezbollah locates its headquarters and arms in the midst of densely populated areas, well aware that any attack on Hezbollah strongholds will thus lead to large numbers of innocent civilian casualties. While certainly true to some extent, the problem is: Why does Israel, fully aware of these tactics, still bomb the sites? The obvious answer is that it believes the deaths of innocents are worth the price of hurting Hezbollah.

Let's try a mental experiment and imagine that, instead of Lebanese women and children, the human shields used by Hezbollah were Israeli women and children. Would the IDF still consider the price affordable and continue the bombing? If the answer is "no," then the IDF is effectively practicing racism, determining that Jewish life has more value than Arab life. No wonder that, in order to defend the IDF's tactics, Alan Der-showitz recently introduced in the *Los Angeles Times* a gradation between civilians, distinguishing between the "totally innocent" Israeli civilians threatened by the Hezbollah rockets and the not-so-innocent Lebanese civilians.

A couple of years ago on a private Slovene TV station, there was a mistranslation of Harrison Ford's words in *Clear and Present Danger*: "I thought it would be a surgical strike!" became, in Slovene subtitles, "I thought surgeons would be



A man walks down the street
after an Israeli airstrike in Tyre.

on strike!" But as the IDF proudly emphasize that their bombing of Lebanon involves only precise surgical strikes—well, obviously, their surgeons are on strike, as the world is bombarded with images of dead Lebanese women and children. The result is catastrophic for Israel's international image, raising the hatred of Israel to new levels. The problem courted by Israel in its continuous display of power is that this display will be soon perceived as a sign of its opposite, of impotence. This paradox of power is known to anyone who has had to play the role of paternal authority: In order to retain its force, power has to remain virtual, a *threat* of power.

Many political theorists, from Blaise Pascal to Immanuel Kant to Joseph de Maistre, have elaborated on the ways in which nation-states have manufactured heroic national mythologies to replace and ultimately erase their "foundational crimes," i.e. the illegitimate political violence necessary for their creation. With regard to this notion, it is true what has

often been said: The misfortune of Israel is that it was established as a nation-state a century too late, in conditions when such "founding crimes" are no longer acceptable (and—ultimate irony—it was the intellectual influence of Jews that contributed to the rise of this unacceptability!).

Why are we more "sensitive" about this violence today? Precisely because, in our global universe that legitimizes itself with morality, sovereign states are no longer exempted from moral judgments, but treated as moral agents to be punished for their crimes, thus severely restraining their sovereignty. (Of course, as the U.S. resistance to the Hague court exemplifies, the problems of who will exert this justice and how the judge himself will be judged remain.)

The Middle East conflict confronts us with the fragility of the border that separates "illegitimate" non-state power from the "legitimate" state power, since, in the case of Israel, its "illegitimate" origins are not yet obliterated, their effects are fully

felt today. When Western observers wonder why Palestinians insist in their stubborn attachment to their land, they demand of Palestinians precisely to ignore the Israeli “illegitimate” state-founding violence. This is why, in a display of poetic justice, Israel is getting back from the Palestinians its own message in its inverted (true) form—and not only in regard to the “pathologically” strong attachment to land. Imagine reading the following statement in today’s media:

Our enemies called us terrorists. ... People who were neither friends nor enemies ... also used this Latin name. ... And yet, we were not terrorists. ... The historical and linguistic origins of the political term ‘terror’ prove that it cannot be applied to a revolutionary war of liberation. ... Fighters for freedom must arm; otherwise they would be crushed overnight. ... What has a struggle for the dignity of man, against oppression and subjugation, to do with ‘terrorism’?

One would automatically attribute it to an Islamic terrorist group and condemn it. The author, however, is none other than Menachem Begin, in the years when Hagannah was fighting the British forces in Palestine. It is interesting to note how, in the years of the Jewish struggle against the British military in Palestine, the very term “terrorist” had a positive connotation. Today, amid Dershowitz’s acrobatic rationalizations, it is almost heartening to look back at the first generation of Israeli leaders, who openly confessed that their claims to the land of Palestine cannot be grounded in universal justice, that we are dealing with a simple war of conquest between two groups where no mediation is possible. Here is what David Ben-Gurion wrote:

Everyone can see the weight of the problems in the relations between Arabs and Jews. But no one sees that there is no solution to these problems. There is no solution! Here is an abyss, and nothing can link its two sides ... We as a people want this land to be ours; the Arabs as a people want this land to be theirs.

The problem with this statement today is clear: Exempting such ethnic conflicts for land from moral considerations is simply no longer acceptable. This is why the way Simon Wiesenthal approached this problem in *Justice, not Vengeance* appears today deeply problematic:

One should finally take cognizance of the fact that one cannot found a state without

curtailing the rights of those who were already settled at this territory. One should be satisfied with the fact that the violations were limited in that a relatively small number of people was hurt. This is how it was when the state of Israel was founded. Eventually the Jewish population lived there for a long time, while the Palestinians were, in comparison with the Jewish one, sparsely settled and had great opportunities to withdraw. That is to say, the continually victorious state of Israel cannot forever rely on the sympathies that the world accords to victims.

What Wiesenthal is advocating here is nothing else than “state-founding violence with a human face,” with “limited violations.” (As to the comparative sparsity of settlers, the population of the Palestinian territory in 1880 was 24,000 Jews versus 300,000 Palestinians.) However, the truly interesting part of this passage is the last sentence: Its only consistent reading is that now that Israel is “continually victorious,” it no longer needs to behave like a victim, but can fully assert its force—true, insofar as one doesn’t forget to add that this power also involves new responsibilities. That is to say, the problem is that Israel, while “continually victorious,” still relies on the image of Jews as victims to legitimize its power politics (and to denounce its critics as closet anti-Semites).

Arthur Koestler, the great anti-Communist convert proposed a profound insight: “If power corrupts, the reverse is also true; persecution corrupts the victims, though perhaps in subtler and more tragic ways.” Cécile Winter recently proposed along these lines a nice mental experiment: Imagine the state of Israel, as it has developed over the last half century, without the history of Jewish suffering as a rationale for its policies. It would be a standard story of colonization. So why should we, as Alain Badiou proposes, *abstract* the Holocaust from our judgments about Israel’s actions toward Palestinians? Not because one can compare the two, but precisely because the Holocaust *was* an incomparably worse crime. It is those who evoke the Holocaust who effectively manipulate it, making it an instrument for today’s political uses. The very need to evoke the Holocaust in defense of Israel’s actions implies that its crimes are so horrible that only the absolute trump-card of the Holocaust can redeem them.

Recall the joke evoked by Freud in order to render the strange logic of dreams: (1) I never borrowed a kettle from you;

(2) I returned it to you unbroken; (3) the kettle was already broken when I got it from you. Such an enumeration of inconsistent arguments confirms what it hopes to deny—that I returned to you a broken kettle. Doesn’t the same inconsistency characterize the way radical Islamists respond to the Holocaust? (1) The Holocaust did not happen. (2) It did happen, but the Jews deserved it. (3) The Jews did not deserve it, but they themselves lost the right to complain by doing to Palestinians what the Nazis did to them. These conflicting positions are reflected in the views of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who recently questioned the historical reality of the Holocaust while implying that guilt for complicity in the Nazi genocide had led European countries to support Israel:

Some European countries insist on saying that Hitler killed millions of innocent Jews in furnaces, and they insist on it to the extent that if anyone proves something contrary to that, they condemn that person and throw them in jail. ... Although we don’t accept this claim, if we suppose it is true, our question for the Europeans is: Is the killing of innocent Jewish people by Hitler the reason for their support to the occupiers of Jerusalem? ... If the Europeans are honest they should give some of their provinces in Europe, like in Germany, Austria or other countries, to the Zionists, and the Zionists can establish their state in Europe. You offer part of Europe, and we will support it.

This statement mixes the most disgusting insinuations with a correct insight. The disgusting part is, of course, Holocaust denial or, even more disgusting, the claim that Jews deserved it (“we don’t accept this claim”: Which one? That Hitler killed million of Jews *or that the Jews were innocent* and did not deserve to be killed?). What is correct, though, is the reminder of European hypocrisy: Europe effectively paid for its own guilt with another people’s land. So when Ariel Sharon’s spokesman Raanan Gissin said in response, “Just to remind Mr. Ahmadinejad, we’ve been here long before his ancestors were here. Therefore, we have a birthright to be here in the land of our forefathers and to live here,” he evoked a historical right, which, if applied universally, would lead to wholesale slaughter. That is to say, can one imagine a world in which ethnic groups would constantly “remind” their neighbors that “we’ve been here before you” (even if this means more than a thousand years ago),

and use this fact to justify seizing their neighbor's land?

THE BIG MYSTERY apropos of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is: *Why does it persist for so long when everybody knows the only viable solution?*—the withdrawal of the Israelis from the West Bank and Gaza, the establishment of a Palestinian state, as well as some kind of a compromise concerning Jerusalem. There is effectively something of a neurotic symptom in the Middle East conflict—everyone sees the way to get rid of the obstacle, and yet, nonetheless, no one wants to remove it, as if there is some kind of pathological libidinal profit gained by persisting in the deadlock.

This is why the Middle East crisis is such a sensitive point for the pragmatic politics that aims to gradually resolve problems in a realistic mode. In this case, the true utopia is precisely that such a “realistic” approach will never work: The only “realistic” solution is the “big” one, to solve the problem at its roots. Here, then, the old motto from 1968 applies: *Soyons réalistes, demandons l'impossible!* Only a radical gesture that has to appear “impossible” within the existing coordinates will realistically do the job. So, perhaps, the solution “everybody knows” as the only viable one—the withdrawal of the Israelis, the establishment of a Palestinian state, etc.—nonetheless will not do, and one has to change the entire frame and propose a one-state-solution where everyone has equal rights.

In the last days of July, President Bush himself admitted the need for a more substantial approach, claiming that all the partial truces and agreements didn't work because they ignored the true cause of the troubles—which for him, of course, is the terrorist states and organizations trying to halt the progress of democracy, not the Palestinian problem. Until now, the United States vehemently rejected the leftist mantra that “we should fight not only terrorism, but also its deeper causes,” dismissing it as the same “soft” attitude as the liberal reminder that one should fight not only crime but also its deeper social causes. Now, all of a sudden, Bush adopted the language of the “war on causes,” rejecting an immediate ceasefire and advocating a solution that would bring a just and lasting peace—to which one should reply: OK, but shouldn't we go to the end here and address the true

problem, the Israeli occupation?

The underlying problem is that not only do Arabs refuse to accept the existence of Israel—Israelis themselves also do not accept the Palestinian presence on the West Bank. Recall, again, Bertolt Brecht's pun apropos of the East Berlin workers' uprising in July 1953: “The Party is not satisfied with its people, so it will replace them with a new people more

tion against “painting an image of home,” against feeling at home anywhere on earth. However, with the process of returning to Palestine, the metaphysical Other Place was directly identified with a determinate place on earth. When Jews lost their land and elevated it into the mythical lost object, “Jerusalem” became much more than a piece of land: It became a metaphor for the coming of the Messiah, for a meta-

There is effectively something of a neurotic symptom in the Middle East—everyone sees the way to get rid of the obstacle and yet, nonetheless, no one wants to remove it.

supportive of its politics.” Is not something homologous discernible today in the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians? The Israeli state is not satisfied with the people on the West Bank and in Gaza, so it considers the option of replacing them with another people. That, precisely, some among the Jews, the exemplary victims, are now considering a radical “ethnic cleansing” (the “transfer”—a perfect Orwellian misnomer—of the Palestinians from the West Bank) is the ultimate paradox demanding closer consideration.

If ever there was a passionate attachment to the lost object, a refusal to come to terms with its loss, it is the Jewish attachment to their land and Jerusalem. And aren't the present troubles the supreme proof of the catastrophic consequences of such a radical fidelity, when it is taken literally? In the last 2,000 years, when Jews were fundamentally a nation without land, living permanently in exile, their reference to Jerusalem was, at root, a prohibi-

physical home, for the end of the wandering which characterizes human existence. The phenomenon is well-known: After an object is lost, it turns into a stand-in for much more, for all that we miss in our terrestrial lives. *When a 1,000-year-old dream is finally close to realization, such a realization HAS to turn into a nightmare.*

So what would be the truly radical ethico-political act today in the Middle East? For both Israelis and Arabs, it would be to renounce the (political) control of Jerusalem—that is, to endorse the transformation of the Old Town of Jerusalem into an extra-state place of religious worship controlled (temporarily) by some neutral international force. What both sides should accept is that, by renouncing the political control of Jerusalem, they are effectively renouncing nothing—they are gaining the elevation of Jerusalem into a genuinely sacred site. What they would lose is only what already deserves to be lost: the reduction of religion to a stake in political power plays. ■

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Examining Iran's Ties to Hezbollah

Just how much influence does the Islamic Republic wield over Hezbollah?

BY WILLIAM O. BEEMAN

THE CONFLICT IN LEBANON between Israel and Hezbollah had hardly begun when the Bush administration and its neoconservative supporters began blaming Iran for the conflagration. On July 25, Henry Crumpton, the State Department's coordinator for counterterrorism, told a reporter that Iran is "clearly directing a lot of Hezbollah actions. Hezbollah asks their permission to do things, especially if it has broader international implications." Meanwhile, in the July 24 *Weekly Standard*, William Kristol called Hezbollah's fighting an "act of Iranian aggression" and suggested "we might consider countering [it] ... with a military strike against Iranian nuclear facilities."

However, giving Iran another tongue lashing, or worse, deciding to attack it, will do nothing to stop the violence in the region. Not only is there no evidence that Iran had a role in instigating this round of violence, the possibility itself is unlikely.

Iran's control over Hezbollah has been steadily declining since approximately 1996, during the reformist presidency of Mohammad Khatami. Money does continue to come "from Iran" to support Hezbollah, but not the Iranian government. Instead, it's private religious foundations that direct the bulk of support, primarily to Hezbollah's charitable activities. Nor are the amounts crucial to Hezbollah's survival; even the high estimate frequently cited in the press—\$200 million per annum—is a fraction of Hezbollah's operating funds. However, the most important reason for not targeting Iran for the continued fighting in Lebanon is that this conflict is antithetical to Iran's interests.

Neoconservatives clearly have another agenda in attacking Iran besides stopping Hezbollah. By blaming Iran for this latest flare-up, neoconservatives are following their decade-long program to encourage a military attack against the Islamic Republic.



Supporters of Hezbollah hold posters of Hassan Nasrallah during a protest in Beirut on July 30.

PATRICK BAZZAF/GETTY IMAGES

Iran's support for Hezbollah

The broad assertion that Iran supports Hezbollah is verifiable, but it is important to understand what the nature of this support is, and the extent to which Iran is able to influence the actions of this Shi'ite Lebanese group.

Since 90 percent of Iran's population is Shi'ite, its citizens had an undeniable interest in the fate of its co-religionists in Lebanon following the Revolution of 1978-79. Like Iranians, the Lebanese Shi'ite community was under oppression both from Sunnis and Maronites. Moreover, Palestinian refugees, settled in Lebanon without consultation with the Shi'ite community, served as a drain on

weak local economic resources and drew fire from Israel. The Shi'ites felt helpless and frustrated. The successful revolution in Iran was enormously inspirational to them. While the Iranian central government was weak and scattered after the Revolution, semi-independent charitable organizations, called *bonyad* (literally, "foundation") sponsored by individual Shi'ite clerics began to help the fledgling Hezbollah organization establish itself as a defense force to protect the Shi'ite community. This was simply not state support. Given the semi-independent corporate nature of Shi'ite clerics, especially in the early days of Iran's revolution, when internal power struggles were endemic, there

was little the Khomeini government could do to curtail these operations.

Now, after nearly two decades, this ad hoc export of Iranian revolutionary ideology may have succeeded too well. Whereas today the bulk of the Iranian population has at least some doubts about their government, Hezbollah maintains a stronger commitment to the symbolic legacy of the Iranian Revolution than Iranians, according to Georgetown University professor Daniel Byman. In a 2003 *Foreign Affairs* article, Byman pointed out that, “[Iran] lacks the means to force a significant change in the [Hezbollah] movement and its goals. It has no real presence on the ground in Lebanon and a call to disarm or cease resistance would likely cause Hezbollah’s leadership, or at least its most militant elements, simply to sever ties with Tehran’s leadership.”

In short, Hezbollah has now taken on a life of its own. Even if all Iranian financial and logistic support were cut off, Hezbollah would not only continue, it would thrive.

Hezbollah has achieved this independence by becoming as much a social welfare and political organization as a militant resistance organization. In a 2004 speech, Dwight J. Simpson, a professor of international relations at San Francisco State University, reported that it had “12 elected parliamentary members...[and] many Hezbollah members hold elected positions within local governments.” At that time, the group had already built five hospitals and was building more. It operated 25 primarily secular schools, and provided subsidies to shopkeepers.

The source for their money, Simpson reported, is *zakat*—the charitable “tithe” required of all Muslims. The Shi’ites, having seen their co-religionists in Iraq succeed in initial elections there in 2005, had hopes that they too would assume the power in Lebanon that accorded with their status as the nation’s largest community, approximately 40 percent of the population. The growth of Hezbollah’s charitable operations increased non-state-level financial support for the organization not only from Iran, but from the rest of the Shi’ite world, since formalized charity is a religious duty. As this charitable activity increased, Hezbollah was on the road to ceasing its activities as a terrorist group and gradually assuming the role of a political organization. Even in its current engagement with Israel, its “terrorist” activities have been

reframed as national defense, especially as Hezbollah began to use conventional military forces and weapons.

Many of these weapons, it is claimed, have been acquired from Iran over the years, but even this is not fully verified. The rockets used by Hezbollah have been tentatively identified as Katushya rockets, of the form manufactured by Iran, and known as Fajr-3 and Fajr-5. But the United

Hezbollah has now taken on a life of its own. Even if all Iranian financial and logistical support were cut off, the group would not only continue, it would thrive.

States has not been able to identify that these rockets are absolutely Iranian.

Moreover, although it is certainly possible that branches of Iran’s Islamic guard may be operating in Lebanon without the full knowledge of the central government of Iran, no country has yet been able to verify their presence in the current conflict, and rumors that they have aided in the firing of the rockets have been vehemently denied by Hezbollah’s leader, Hassan Nasrallah. Given the loose and ambiguous nature of the Iranian government’s control over support for Hezbollah, claims by U.S. officials that Iran has an organized state-level support system for such activities are clearly exaggerated.

Added to all of this is the fact that the Lebanese violence does not serve Iran’s political purposes. The verbal attacks of its president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, against Israel would cause it to be targeted if Israel were ever involved in a wider conflict with the Islamic world. Although Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has claimed that Iran instigated this attack to draw attention away from criticism of its nuclear development program, this scenario seems far-fetched. Indeed, Iran’s strategic situation has certainly been worsened by this fighting. Kenneth Katzman, senior Middle East analyst at the Congressional Research Service, recently told Voice of America: “Iran is viewed, widely viewed, as at least complicit in what is going on, supporting Hezbollah. And that is likely to make some of the fence-sitters, I guess Russia and China perhaps, take a dimmer view of Iranian intentions and perhaps be more amenable to U.S. and other argu-

ments that Iran is playing a destabilizing role in the region and needs to be confronted by the [U.N. Security] Council.”

Beyond state support

Why would the United States repeat such unfounded assertions with such incessant regularity as if they were established fact? Aside from their continuity with 27 years of ongoing attacks against Iran, such as-

sections accord with a longstanding U.S. foreign policy myth that believes terrorism cannot exist without state support. If a state is needed to explain the continued existence of groups like Hezbollah, then Iran is an ideal candidate. Ergo, the connection must exist. Such claims serve to bolster the central, but fallacious, political doctrine for the Bush administration that the Global War on Terrorism really exists.

The alternative is to understand that terrorism is fundamentally community-based. Sub-state groups with grievances that they feel cannot be addressed in any other way resort to terrorism as a way of increasing attention to their plight and pressuring those whom they perceive to be oppressing them. Though they may welcome external financial support, the impetus and motivation for terrorist groups’ actions is not dependent on it. Indeed, the more pressure they are subjected to, the stronger their collective will to resist increases.

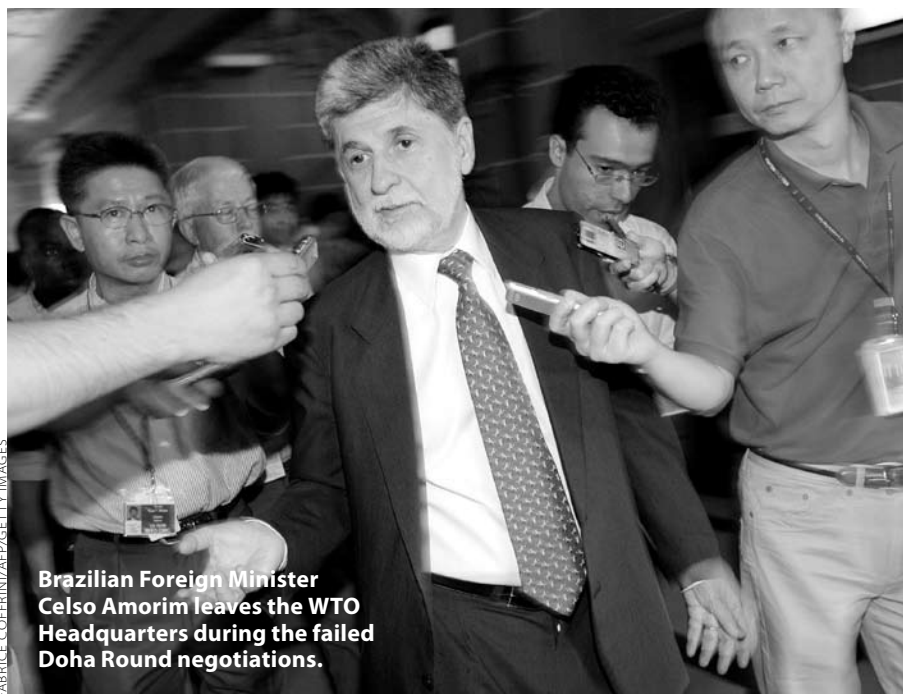
When this dynamic is understood, the problems of addressing terrorism also come into focus. Rather than looking for global fantasy structures such as al-Qaeda and their state supporters, the international community needs to employ methods to address the needs of sub-state groups, while simultaneously working to curtail their activities as conditions improve. For the Shi’ites in Lebanon, it may be far too late to employ such a strategy. ■

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The Death of Doha

The WTO model has collapsed. What's next?

BY DAVID MOBERG



Brazilian Foreign Minister Celso Amorim leaves the WTO Headquarters during the failed Doha Round negotiations.

ELITE EDITORIALISTS AND FREE-TRADE devotees gnashed their teeth in distress when the latest round of World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations collapsed in late July. But amidst the hand-wringing, many advocates for the world's poor cheered. Walden Bello, executive director of Focus on the Global South, said flatly, "The collapse of the Doha Round is good for the poor."

How could that be? Frustrated with what they saw as original WTO rules skewed to benefit the rich, the world's poor countries wanted to win a trade deal that would help them this time around. The rich countries had promised to make it easier for them to export their agricultural goods.

But in reality, the failed talks were never about helping the poor or about development. Even if the rich countries had cut tariffs, subsidies and other protection for their farmers—as everyone from free-trade fundamentalists to many developing nations urged them to do—the big

winners still would have been corporations. Cargill, ADM and others that trade and process what farmers produce stood to profit, not the poor, urban or rural, who would have gained on average less than a penny a day in income over a decade.

The Doha collapse is good for the poor mainly because it thwarts an expansion of a global economy built around opening markets for multinational corporations and protecting their interests. As a result, the collapse also signals a turning point for regulation of the global economy, even if it provides no tangible gain for the poor.

Bits and pieces of an alternative that promotes a broader vision of social and economic development have emerged, but there is still no consensus (for example, over ways to protect workers' rights), let alone enough powerful governments willing to push for it. Until governments—especially the United States—accept the need for a alternative, perhaps developed outside the confines of the WTO, the best

that can be achieved is gridlock.

Although the comatose WTO talks may eventually be revived, in the meantime countries will accelerate negotiation of bilateral trade agreements, like the pending agreements between the United States and both Peru and Colombia. In most cases, developing countries and especially their poor will likely suffer more in such lopsided negotiations than they would in the multilateral WTO talks.

"I'm cheered by the collapse because I didn't see anything good coming out of this round," says Larry Weiss, executive director of the Citizens Trade Campaign, a fair trade coalition. "That doesn't mean that the collapse presages anything better. One of the things it will lead to is a patchwork of bilateral and regional deals. The terms imposed on poorer countries may be even worse."

The biggest multinational corporations, which wanted a new agreement, especially with expanded WTO rules over trade in services (from financial services to water systems), will not be slowed significantly by this failure. But they do face a rockier political road.

There's overt rebellion against the "Washington Consensus" of free trade, privatization and minimal government from leaders in countries like Bolivia and Venezuela. There's hard-nosed bargaining about the terms of trade in countries like Brazil. And despite lingering influence of big business money and ideology, there is growing, if tentative, resistance to the old model from Democratic politicians in the United States, who believe that trade deals have to protect labor and the environment and not give special legal privileges to multinational corporations (See "The Prairie Populist: Byron Dorgan" page 36).

Congress approved the Central American Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) last year by just two votes (with 15 House Democrats supporting Bush), but Costa Rica has not yet ratified the treaty, and the Dominican Republic has not fully implemented it. The free trade agreement with Oman also narrowly passed in July, following exposés of Oman's weak record on labor rights and of the widespread abuse of migrant garment workers in Jordan, whose 2001 free trade agreement had slightly improved labor rights language. If Democrats win a majority in

either house of Congress this fall, President Bush will have a particularly tough time next year renewing the “fast track” trade negotiating authority that restricts opposition to trade deals.

National negotiators disagreed over many issues in the Doha talks, but the biggest stumbling block was agricultural trade. The United States and the European Union were supposed to reduce tariffs and subsidies to permit developing nations to sell their agricultural products without unfair competition or obstacles. But the developed countries retained loopholes that could have preserved most subsidies.

At the same time, the United States insisted on freer access to developing countries’ markets for industrial goods and services, undermining their efforts to protect infant industries. The final straw came when the United States, bowing to lobbies from the big domestic agricultural producers, insisted that developing countries give up nearly all powers to protect sensitive farm products, including such staple crops as rice that sustain vast numbers of poor peasants.

But even if the United States had played a completely honest, well-intentioned role in the talks, the Doha round would have been a failure for the poor. That’s simply because the dominant free trade model does not promote development in poor countries (just as it fails to promote equity in developed countries).

Over the past year, several different economists working for the United Nations and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace have published projections of the likely outcome of any Doha scenarios. The results are striking: The gains from trade would be extremely modest, with the rich countries capturing roughly four-fifths of any benefits, and many of the world’s poorest countries actually losing ground. Even if rich countries eliminated all agricultural subsidies and tariffs, developing countries would enjoy a one-time gain of less than a penny per person per day.

But just a few countries, such as China, Vietnam, Argentina, Brazil and India, would capture most of the developing countries’ benefits. Many others—including most of sub-Saharan Africa—would be worse off.

If Doha talks had succeeded, the results might have reduced global poverty by only 0.3 percent, or 6 million people.

And typically that would only involve moving incomes from a few pennies less than \$2 a day to a few pennies more.

And even this dismal picture overstates the benefits: it does not take into account the losses that the Doha Agreement would have imposed—cuts in vital government revenue from tariffs, new constraints on government economic policies, new intellectual property rights requirements that would raise medical costs, and accelerate displacement of poor peasants into exploding slums of the urban unemployed, further depressing wage levels.

Critics from left and right heap blame for the plight of poor peasants on subsidies to rich countries’ farmers, whose exports lower world prices. But George Naylor, an Iowa farmer and president of the National Family Farm Coalition (NFFC), argues that American agricultural subsidies are designed primarily to maintain production of cheap commodities for corporations, not to help farmers.

Dumping farm products on the world market below the cost of production does harm competing farmers and should be prevented. But simply eliminating subsidies in the United States would bring “very little change in production and very little boost in prices,” according to Tim Wise, deputy director of the Global Development and Environment Institute at Tufts University.

Agribusiness multinationals want to

expand trade and exploit low-cost commodities. But advocates for small farmers from both poor and rich countries, such as the NFFC, argue for “food sovereignty,” or the right of each nation to fashion its own food strategy to strike a balance between urban and rural incomes. Both at national and international levels, they want to allow governments to manage supply to prevent ruinous competition, to maintain incomes for the half of humanity still living in rural areas and to support an economy of independent producers.

In this view, development is at odds with an unregulated market. But domination of global agriculture by a few big corporations doesn’t fit free market utopias either. And the WTO’s narrow focus on trade and anarchic markets has a track record of failure. In a review of the leading research on trade and growth, economists Dani Rodrik of Harvard and Francisco Rodriguez of the University of Maryland concluded there is “little evidence that open trade policies...are significantly associated with economic growth.” It’s not that trade is bad, but in order to grow quickly and equitably countries need to employ a wide range of policies, including government regulation, that are tailored to their own distinctive needs.

The WTO model has failed. But its replacement as a framework for the global economy is not yet in sight. ■



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BY DAVID SIROTA

The Prairie Populist: Byron Dorgan

North Dakota Sen. Byron Dorgan is a popular Democrat from a very “red” rural state. He’s remained a voter favorite not because he’s tried to split the difference with Republicans or suck up to the Washington power structure, but because of the populist stands embodied in his

new book *Take This Job and Ship It: How Corporate Greed and Brain-Dead Politics Are Selling Out America*. In the book, Dorgan takes on Washington’s bipartisan consensus on trade issues, detailing how politicians of both parties are betraying ordinary Americans by pushing “free” trade pacts written by corporate lobbyists. These pacts, which polls show the public opposes, are filled with protectionist provisions for the corporations who write them and are “free” only in that they are free of similar protections for regular citizens.

Since being elected to the House in 1980, where he served six terms before being elected to the Senate in 1992, Dorgan has taken on both Republicans and Democrats who have sold out to corporate interests on trade deals; for his trouble, he has been berated by his colleagues and ignored by the media. But now, with wages stagnating, job outsourcing intensifying, and pension and health benefits being slashed, Dorgan can no longer be shunted aside. Dorgan discussed his new book with *In These Times* in early August.

How do you account for the false debate on trade issues, where it’s either people who want trade or people who don’t want trade?

The other side has stolen the language. We’ve seen that happen in politics with the term “liberal,” where they make the term mean something it doesn’t mean. We see this stolen language on free trade. They have had accomplices—the ma-

jor newspapers that have corporate ties and interests. They describe the circumstances of our participation in the global economy, and those who don’t sign up for their version of that are labeled protectionist “xenophobes” or “isolationists.”

Do you ascribe any failure to our side for not doing a better job of fighting for fair trade?

Oh absolutely. Some on “our side,” have been perfectly willing to get dressed and walk down the aisle with [corporate interests] because they want to be seen as “pro-business.”

There’s no one person to blame. Look, the Clinton administration pushed NAFTA. It’s true that Reagan and the first George Bush began the discussions and negotiations on NAFTA, but President Clinton pushed it, and NAFTA is a demonstrated failure. Probably three-quarters of a million net jobs lost, and in addition, we turned a very small trade surplus with Mexico into a very large trade deficit with very few benefits to Mexican workers.

Do you think the Democratic Party can define itself as the party of “fair trade” with its current leadership?

I admit, there’s probably a quarter of the [Democratic] caucus here in the U.S. Senate that I think is wrong on the trade issue, but it’s also the case that a large majority of the Democratic caucus is on the right side of the issue—demanding fair trade, and working against CAFTA, working against NAFTA.

Do you see a change in the thinking about trade among the lawmakers you work with?

One of the reasons I wrote the book is to show my colleagues and Democrats around the country that there’s a way to talk about this that should not brand you as someone who wants to put walls around America or as someone who’s not pro-growth. There’s a way to talk about this that suggests that our position is one that expands opportunities and creates more economic growth. I’m hoping to light a fuse, to create national debate about an issue that has largely been hidden from view, except for the day-to-day pain of people who are losing their jobs.

There was never really a serious chance that any of the trade pacts in the last five years would be stopped in the Senate, but in the House, votes have been close. How do you account for that?

Well, most every member of the Senate goes to the mirror in the morning and sees a potential president. I’m half joking here, but those kinds of aspirations make it so that you don’t want to provoke a fight with the largest established interests in the country. They want to try to be seen as “pro-business.” You can’t be seen as “pro-business” in the eyes of the Chamber of Commerce and others unless you sign up for these trade agreements.

Are you concerned about the prospect that a Democratic president would be more of the same on trade?

Yes, of course. We’re kind of at a tipping point. It’s taken a couple of decades to get to the point where we have an engine that’s slowly revved up to move jobs overseas as a source of cheap labor. This could accelerate very rapidly, and the opportunities we’ve seen decade after decade—greater opportunities for our kids, better jobs that pay well with better benefits—all of that could deconstruct



Sen. Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.)
is tough on trade

very quickly. That's why this is a really important time to have this debate. My hope is we will nominate someone who will take this debate on.

Some will say, "Look, the Democratic Party has always been the party of internationalist, 'free' trade." What's your response to that?

Free trade of half a century ago and free trade today are completely different subjects. Free trade today is now generally defined as the opportunity to transfer capital and technology anywhere in the world to employ labor to build your products to ship to America. That didn't exist 50 to 75 years ago. Free trade then was about producing here and selling there, producing there and selling here, in circumstances where we were able to work with other countries to persuade them to reduce barriers. It wasn't about moving jobs and creating low wage countries as platforms of manufacturing opportunities.

How have you as a senator been able to be immune from the free trade consensus?

This started with me back in the mid-'80s when I was in the House. The event that really prompted me was the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement, the first

one that preceded NAFTA. I was on the House Ways and Means committee at the time, and I said I'm going to learn about and understand this agreement. I even went to Montreal during some of the sessions and sat in and tried to understand what the deal was doing. At the end, I realized that in exchange for opportunities in the financial service sectors, they traded away the interest of family farmers. When they finally had those votes, the vote was 34 to one, and I was the one. And they tried every which way, they said "You can't do this, this needs to be a unanimous vote." And I said, "You know what, this is bullshit. I'm not going to support something that I think undermines our country's interests. I don't believe this was negotiated in a way that represents our country's best interests."

The wealthiest corporate interests are essentially unified in support of the current trade policies. Does that mean a reform of trade policy is ultimately contingent on serious campaign finance reform?

I don't know that it's connected so much to that as it is to a grassroots movement by the American citizens who say, "Wait a second, we're not going to put up with this anymore. We know what kind

of future this is going to offer us and we don't like it." At some point, there is a tipping point that's going to happen on this issue. It would have happened already if these trade talks had always been transparent and conducted in plain view.

Do people ask you how you can run on these issues coming from a "red state?"

I'm obviously in front of a lot of groups in North Dakota, and I get asked a lot about these issues. Most people agree with me, that we ought to stand up for this country's economic interests, we ought to demand fairness, we ought to stand up for workers, farmers, and America's small businesses.

Does anybody really think that after a century of what we went through to define what kind of standards we want in this country—work standards, environmental standards—that now all bets are off and we should say to the American worker, "You compete with people who will work 7 days a week, 14 hours a day and are paid 25 cents an hour"? Does anybody really believe we should compete with that or if we were forced to, could compete successfully? The answer is "hell no."

What will happen in 20 years if we keep our trade policy on autopilot right now?

We'll continue to sell pieces of our country off everyday with the trade deficit. But more importantly, we'll see the American worker, the American family with diminished opportunities, downward pressure on their wages, fewer health benefits, fewer retirement benefits, children having more difficulty in coming out of school and getting a job.

Now go 20 years ahead, and tell me what you see if we reform our trade policy.

If we make some changes and decide that we're going to be a world leader and we're going to retain our strength as a world-class economy, we're going to hopefully expand trade, but it has to be fair trade. We're going to create standards that require others to lift themselves up as they do business with us. We're going to take the steps that will be necessary to make sure that American people will have good jobs that pay well and that when productivity increases they will see opportunities to increase their incomes. If we do all of that, I think we'll have a better future and reason for hope. ■



KATI NEUDERT / DREAMTIME.COM

BY LAKSHMI CHAUDHRY

Why Hemingway Is Chick-Lit

“When women stop reading, the novel will be dead,” declared Ian McEwan in the *Guardian* last year. The British novelist reached this rather dire conclusion after venturing into a nearby park in an attempt to give away free novels. The result?

Only one “sensitive male soul” took up his offer, while every woman he approached was “eager and grateful” to do the same.

Unscientific as McEwan’s experiment may be, its thesis is borne out by a number of surveys conducted in Britain, the United States and Canada, where men account for a paltry 20 percent of the market for fiction. Unlike the gods of the literary establishment who remain predominantly male—both as writers and critics—their humble readers are overwhelmingly female.

In recent years, various pundits have used this so-called “fiction gap” as an opportunity to trot out their pet theories on what makes men and women tick. The most recent is *New York Times* columnist David Brooks, who jumped at the chance to ped-

dle his special brand of gender essentialism. His June 11 column arbitrarily divided all books into neat boy/girl categories—“In the men’s sections of the bookstore, there are books describing masterly men conquering evil. In the women’s sections there are novels about ... well, I guess feelings and stuff.” His sweeping assertion flies in the face of publishing industry research, which shows that if “chick-lit” were defined as what women read, the term would have to include most novels, including those considered macho territory. A 2000 survey found that women comprised a greater percentage of readers than men across all genres: Espionage/thriller (69 percent); General (88 percent); Mystery/Detective (86 percent); and even Science Fiction (52 percent).

Brooks' real agenda, however, is not to deride women's fiction, but to promote the latest conservative talking point: blaming politically correct liberals for a "feminized" school curriculum that turns young boys "into high school and college dropouts who hate reading." According to Brooks, we have burdened little boys with "new-wave" novels about "introspectively morose young women," when they would be better served by suitably masculine writers like Ernest Hemingway. "It could be, in short, that biological factors influence reading tastes, even after accounting for culture," Brooks claims. "The problem is that even after the recent flurry of attention about why boys are falling behind, there is still intense social pressure not to talk about biological differences between boys and girls (ask Larry Summers)."

It takes a bizarre leap of logic to connect current school curricula to the reading habits of adult men. Moreover, there is no indication that men "hate reading"—women just read more fiction. Men out-read women by at least ten percentage points when it comes to nonfiction books—surely good news for the bestselling author of *Bobos in Paradise*.

To be fair, conservatives like Brooks are not the only talking-heads to resort to biological determinism in explaining the "fiction gap." Psychologist Dorothy Rowe told the *Observer* that women like fiction because they have richer and more complex imaginations. "Women have always had to try to understand what other people are doing because women have always had to negotiate their way through the family," she said. "They have always had to get their power by having a pretty good idea of what's going on inside other people and using that knowledge to get them to do things." Quite apart from the unintended implication that feminism is likely to fulfill McEwan's worst fears—i.e., kill the novel—such arguments reproduce the worst kind of gender stereotypes: Women as sensitive, emotionally intelligent creatures; men as unreflective dolts.

Cognitive literary critic Lisa Zunshine, whose multidisciplinary field integrates the insights offered by cognitive science to better understand fiction, offers a more modest and nuanced hypothesis.

Her book, *Why We Read Fiction*, argues that fiction as a literary form offers us pleasure because it engages our ability to mind-read, "a term used by cognitive psychologists, interchangeably with 'Theory of Mind,' to describe our ability

Don't look now, but we may be headed back to the 19th century, when the novel was considered a low-status, frivolous pastime of ladies of leisure, unfit for real men.

to explain people's behavior in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and desires." Fiction, therefore, "lets us try on different mental states."

Women are more likely than men to enjoy reading fiction, period (as opposed to just reading about "feelings and stuff"), because "they generally want more input for their Theory-of-Mind adaptations," says Zunshine. "They want to experience other 'minds in action'—which is another way of defining 'empathy'—much more than men do."

Zunshine underscores the fact that such cognitive research is based on "average statistical scores," and offers no guidance as to what individual men or women may read. Moreover, the biological difference between male and female Theory-of-Mind is small, and likely only accounts for a "somewhat greater" predilection for fiction among women.

But in a culture infused with polarizing messages about gender, such small differences can be magnified into vast disparities. If the act of reading novels today seems more "girly"—because of female-dominated book clubs or a publishing industry increasingly geared toward its most loyal customers, i.e., women—then men are less likely to do so. That's partly why Jonathan Franzen worried about being endorsed by Oprah. Franzen told NPR, "I had some hope of actually reaching a male audience [for *The Corrections*] and I've heard more than one [male] reader in signing lines now at bookstores say 'If I hadn't heard you, I would have been put off by the fact that it is an Oprah pick. I figure those books are for women. I would never touch it.'"

Desperate efforts to "macho" up the novel include Penguin's "Good Book-ing" campaign, which sent out—who else?—beautiful models to award prizes of £1,000 each month to any British man under 25 caught in *flagrante* with one of

its testosterone-friendly titles. The advertising tag line? "What women really want is a man with a Penguin."

Apart from sex with beautiful models, men are also socialized to seek out activities that confer status—which, these days, sadly doesn't include reading novels. According to novelist Walter Kirn, "If novelists have become culturally invisible—at least to today's men—it's partly because the life of a novelist offers few rewards to the traditional male ego. It's not about power, glory and money," unlike the adulation our culture reserves for rap stars, athletes and movie actors.

Don't look now, but we may be headed back to the 19th century, when the novel was considered a low-status, frivolous, pastime of ladies of leisure, unfit for real men. As Margaret Atwood pointed out in a 1998 speech, "To trace the trajectory of the novel is to follow the struggle of the novelist—even, perhaps especially, the male novelist—to be taken seriously—that is, to raise the perception of his chosen form from that of a piece of silly frou-frou to the higher, more male realm of capital-A Art." This project kicked into high gear in the 20th century—so much so that by 1935 Ernest Hemingway could blithely declare, "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*."—and reached its peak during the chest-thumping Beat movement.

But were men more likely to read novels when Jack Kerouac ruled the literary world? The answer is unclear, primarily because industry research in this area has been erratic until recent decades. So, it's hard to establish a definitive link between the size of male readership and

the status accorded fiction in society—at least over the past 100 years. Nor do we know if these trends hold true in other, non-English speaking cultures.

What is clear is that the novel seems to be reverting to its origins as a feminine hobby, and hence is in danger of being toppled off its high artistic perch. Explaining his newspaper's decision to radically cut down on fiction reviews, *New York Times* editor Bill Keller told a Poynter columnist, "The most compelling ideas tend to be in the non-fiction world." Others, like *Toronto Star* book columnist Phillip Marchand, are happy to quote their 19th century forbears like poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge—"Where the reading of novels prevails as a habit, it occasions in time the entire destruction of the powers of the mind."—to conclude, "And if non-fiction can provide examples of fresh and precise use of language, and enlargement of our powers of sympathy and imagination, there's no reason to insist, in the case of male readers, that it make way for fiction."

It's a good thing, then, that the great male novelists can still rely on us girls to finance their literary careers. ■

BOOKS

White Blight

By Nancy MacLean

IN 1957, AS the civil rights movement gained steam, the conservative *National Review* opined: "the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary for it to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically." Why? "Because, for the time being, it is the advanced race."

As the civil rights movement convinced most white Americans that this kind of in-your-face racism was wrong, conservative leaders had to find new ways to make their case. They learned to redirect the moral power of civil rights rhetoric to fight any policy that might actually yield greater equality. Today, conservatives invoke equal opportunity and the "earned" advantages that come from effort and merit, as they denounce discrimination ("reverse discrimination," that is) with born-again fervor.

Two important new books by historians reveal the sordid origins of this politics of



WARREN K. LEFFLER

Civil rights victories spawned a suburban backlash.

"race neutrality." Both trace its emergence to grassroots white opposition to racial justice in the Sunbelt South and point to the '70s as the time of its triumph. *White Flight: Atlanta and the Making of Modern Conservatism*, by Kevin M. Kruse, traces "color-blind" conservatism to Atlanta, where, as Kruse puts it, "Much of the modern suburban conservative agenda—the secessionist stance toward cities, the individualistic outlook, the fervent faith in free enterprise, and the hostility to the federal government—was, in fact, first articulated in the resistance of southern whites to desegregation." In *The Silent Majority: Suburban Politics in the Sunbelt South*, Matthew D. Lassiter reaches beyond Atlanta to offer a region-wide and comparative view. His portrait shows that blue-state readers ought not to feel smug: The mechanisms that local conservatives fashioned to protect white suburban privilege now work better in the North and West than in the South.

Both works point toward economic justice as the vital frontier for civil rights today. Without a fight against class privilege in public policy, they demonstrate, black poverty will only deepen in the new, ostensibly race-neutral, suburban-dominated order.

White Flight reveals how profoundly the Old South shaped the New Right. Kruse's gripping account takes off in

the '40s, when black Atlantans pushed for fair treatment with new confidence after World War II. As they organized voter registration drives and demanded better schools and services, the city's moderate power structure began to bend. That infuriated some working-class whites in neighborhoods adjoining overcrowded black communities, and some turned to proto-fascist organizations like the Columbians and the Ku Klux Klan. But they didn't get far, and they learned from that failure.

In devastating detail, Kruse documents how some of the very people who had rallied to fascist appeals realized that subtler, hate-free messages would achieve more. They built new homeowners' associations, ostensibly race-neutral, to advocate their "rights"—especially "freedom of association," understood as the right to have all-white neighbors, classrooms, and public accommodations. The founder of the West End Homeowners' Association, for example, came from the "Housing Committee" of the Ku Klux Klan. Homeowner organizing taught segregationists that to win they must avoid violence, curb outright racist rhetoric and enlist widely shared "middle-class values" such as "the home as a reward for a life of hard work." Using the new framing, white property owners exerted political power to contain black home

buying, restrict public housing projects and ensure that black communities never gained equal services.

When the Civil Rights Act of 1964 imperiled that strategy, many whites safeguarded their privileges with what Kruse calls a "politics of suburban secession." In other words, they deserted the city. The African-American share of Atlanta's population doubled, from one-third in 1960 to two-thirds by 1980. By then, less than one in 10 public school pupils was white. Losing broad-based support, public institutions withered and whites balked at paying for them. Embracing an ideology that exalted individual liberty over the good of the community, such whites flocked to the conservative agenda of tax revolt, school vouchers and wider privatization of public services.

Yet, in the end, the working-class segregationists on whom Kruse focuses may not have been the real culprits in the deepening of urban racial inequality. Matthew Lassiter reveals how, by making low-income white city residents bear all the burdens of desegregation, affluent

whites in the suburbs created the conditions that made backlash likely. Lassiter's study of homeowner politics and municipal policy in several southern cities shows how suburbanites rejected the overt resistance policies that came from the Deep South. Yet, while denouncing segregationists as bigots, they escaped to their own parallel universe of exclusive communities and schools in which entrance costs ensured homogeneity. What it took to win over these new voters, a chastened Nixon learned when his race-baiting "southern strategy" bombed in the 1970 mid-term elections, was a "color-blind and class-driven discourse."

Such appeals had bipartisan roots, Lassiter reminds liberals who are inclined to avoid the mirror when pointing fingers. The "affiliation of voters as Republicans or Democrats," he notes, "has often mattered less than the populist identifications of suburban residents as homeowners, taxpayers, and schoolparents."

Throughout the entire country, such unapologetic class segregation gained the blessing of the Supreme Court in two mo-

mentous rulings of the early '70s. "Wealth discrimination" by suburban communities, the court said, is okay in America.

Lassiter's powerful and persuasive exposition of the consensus among suburban voters and national authorities will be disheartening for seekers of social justice. Yet his work also holds out an alternative to the downward spiral.

By comparing several different cities whose success with desegregation varied, Lassiter shows how public policy can make a difference. In particular, he asks why Charlotte, N.C., ended up with far more integrated public schools than Atlanta. Where Atlanta was legally cut off from its suburbs and imposed busing only on white working-class communities within the city limits, Charlotte annexed its suburbs to spread the benefits and costs of desegregation among the entire metropolitan population. That outcome was a victory for the local civil rights activists and blue-collar whites whose coalition forced the county's white elite to participate in two-way busing with a grassroots-backed

[art space]



"Sadeel and Aboud" is one in a series of portraits of Palestinians that photographer Alessandra Sanguinetti shot in Autumn 2003, during the waning days of the second intifada. A virtual exhibit at ArteEast (www.arteeast.org) features the photos, which include atmospheric shots of life among the rubble of refugee camps in Bethlehem and the Gaza Strip.

"This place, usually associated with dramatic extremes of spectacular violence and eternal conflict, is revealed to us in its quieter moments, no less terrifying for the veneer of calm that presses them into the photograph's frame," writes Middle East scholar Lori Allen in an accompanying essay. "Nothing is ever clear, no future is fixed ... These images let the uncertainty be. That diffidence is what unsettles."

class-action lawsuit, *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenberg*. Thanks to its commitment to class fairness, their school system became one of the most successfully integrated in the nation. Integrated by both class and race, the system provided such high-quality education that two-thirds of white families stayed loyal to public schools. Proud of the results, even Charlotte Republicans balked when the Reagan administration tried to end their busing program.

While a beacon, the Charlotte approach also proved a rarity: most American cities reacted to the civil rights challenge as Atlanta did. They are now marked by “a metropolitan landscape of spatial apartheid,” with hyper-segregated and resource-starved urban schools and overwhelmingly white suburbs that jealously guard their borders. Anxious to curry favor with these suburban voters—who since 1992 have constituted the majority of the electorate—Democrats as well as Republicans turn a blind eye to what they now characterize not as unfair racial discrimination, but as acceptable class exclusivity.

Commitment to middle-class entitlement has an all-American following among whites today, these books make clear. Yet in their emphasis on its local, organic origins, both authors neglect the steady agitation of national conservative leaders, including those grouped around *National Review*, who in time defeated Republican moderates and turned the GOP into an arm of their movement.

The GOP right and its wealthiest backers benefited the most from the reconfiguration of metropolitan space to enshrine the convictions of neo-liberal ideology. By enabling the fantasy that white suburbanites have played no part in black disadvantage, the rhetoric of color blindness nurtured, as Lassiter puts it, “an identity politics of suburban innocence that defined ‘freedom of choice’ and ‘neighborhood schools’ as core elements of homeowner rights and consumer liberties, rejecting as reverse discrimination any policy designed to provide substantive integration remedies for systematic inequality of opportunity.”

With so many whites now persuaded that the biggest investment of their lives depends on letting “the market” reproduce inequality without any government correction, the right has inertia on its side, whichever party wins the next elections. ■

CULTURE

Plagiarists: Catch Your Own Clue

By Susan J. Douglas

PLAGIARISM IS ON the rise—in journalism, by bestselling authors, on college campuses and online. But the one thing those of us victimized by it can't do is speak up. If we do, we are accused of “sour grapes.”

Occasionally, reporters who make things up (Jayson Blair) or copy from another newspaper (most recently *New York Post* reporter Andy Geller) do get fired or suspended for sheer fabrication or thievery. But increasingly, only the form of expression is protected: I can steal your ideas all I want as long as I put them in my own words.

Educators are supposed to teach our students that intellectual theft is the worst crime they can commit in the academy, yet these same students see all sorts of people, from Doris Kearns Goodwin to Ann Coulter, profiting from it. One study in 2005 found that 70 percent of undergraduates said they had cheated. And why not?

Two recent cases expose the increasingly elastic journalistic and publishing standards vis-à-vis plagiarism. In early July, *The New York Post* reported that John Barrie, whose company iParadigms provides a plagiarism tracking service, had found “textbook plagiarism” in Ann Coulter's latest vehicle for personal enrichment and self-promotion, *Godless*. The passages in question, lifted from the *San Francisco Chronicle*, a Planned Parenthood publication, and a newspaper in Portland, Maine, ranged from 24 to 33 words each.

Coulter's publisher Crown responded, “The number of words used by our author in these snippets is so minimal that there is no requirement for attribution.” Similarly, Universal Press Syndicate, which syndicates her column, dismissed the charges, “There are only so many ways you can rewrite a fact and minimal match text is not plagiarism.” As Tim Grieve asked in *Salon*, “How many words can an author steal before the theft counts as plagiarism?” The answer, it seems, rests on how much she's raking in for her companies.

In another case, Valerie Lawson, author of *Out of the Sky She Came*, reportedly the definitive biography of Mary Poppins cre-



Ann Coulter: a *thieving wench*.

ator Pamela Travers, found much of her research presented as original reporting in a *New Yorker* article by Caitlin Flanagan. Flanagan interviewed Lawson for the piece, yet her book was never mentioned. The January/February 2006 *Columbia Journalism Review* reprinted the entire e-mail exchange between Lawson and *New Yorker* editors over the borrowing.

Lawson provided example after example of how previously unknown material about Travers magically appeared in the Flanagan article without attribution. “Much of her article could not be supported by her interviews,” noted Lawson dryly, because “the information came from papers and correspondence of people who are now dead.”

The *New Yorker* insisted that Flanagan had done all the supporting research herself, and replied that “credit given your book in our piece was adequate.” The magazine refused to publish Lawson's initial letter of complaint, proposing, instead, that she write them a letter of gratitude for reminding people about the creator of Mary Poppins.

My own experience with this has been equally unpleasant. In February 2004, Meredith Michaels and I published *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How It Has Undermined Women*. One year later, the journalist Judith Warner published her book *Perfect Madness* on the same subject, the unattainable standards of perfection surrounding motherhood. Much of the argument, point after point, was identical to our book—we compiled six pages of eerily similar passages—yet we were not cited once. Like

Lawson, we saw research we had done included without attribution. But because there were no lengthy passages containing identical prose, we had no recourse. Moreover, we were told that if we sought to go public with this, it would hurt *us*: We would be the ones tainted, not her, as resentful soreheads with no class. After all, as a *Newsweek* reporter, her book became a cover story for the magazine while ours had not—weren't we just bitter?

In our current hyper-commercial and anti-intellectual environment, it is the large corporations and publications that can afford to trademark, patent and copyright everything. Prominent and profitable journalists, unless their borrowing is exact and extensive, are protected. The Coulter case suggests that we may be on an even more slippery slope about how much word-for-word copying will be tolerated by bestselling writers in the future.

Meanwhile, for drones slogging away in archives, tracking down people to interview, checking their facts and struggling to develop fresh ideas about how to see the world and new arguments about history, culture and society, forget it. Your work is increasingly fair game. ■

BOOKS

I.F. Stone: Iconic Muckracker

By Steve Weinberg

IN 1953, A talented but obscure journalist named I.F. Stone decided to start a newsletter allowing him to report and comment about politics, war and peace. At age 45, Stone had no reason to believe that the four-page newsletter, *I.F. Stone's Weekly*, would succeed financially or in any other way. Yet Stone kept the newsletter afloat for two decades and is remembered today, 17 years after his death, as an iconoclastic muckraker.

In a remarkable book, Myra MacPherson reveals the real I.F. Stone. Born Isador Feinstein in 1907, he changed his name at age 20 to avoid anti-Semitism in his professional life. (Most people who knew him referred to him as just Izzy.)

"All Governments Lie": The Life and Times of Rebel Journalist I.F. Stone explores all sides of this storied reporter. Professionally, Stone is absolutely worthy of admiration. In his personal life, the evidence is more mixed—few icons are paragons of virtue 24/7.

Although he obviously loved both his children and his saintly wife Esther, he frequently treated them both with impatience and condescension.

Still, the reasons to admire the private Stone far outnumber the reasons to dislike him, including his fearlessness when exposing abuses of government authority, the erudition combined with relentless curiosity that led him to believe he could master any subject matter and his exhaustive research that served as a model for lesser journalists. He used those qualities to demonstrate the immorality and dishonesty of the Vietnam War, to stand up for racial equality and to write relentlessly about those in power who persecuted the innocent.

Lots of biographers, myself included, find the more they come to know their subjects, the less they are able to muster admiration. Not MacPherson, a longtime journalist, who notes that "Today, Izzy's remarkable immediacy leaps off the pages. Not only is he a sheer joy to read, his views take on vital importance, sounding as if he had written them this morning, illuminating the tumultuous first five years of the twenty-first century." She cites this quote from Stone as one example: "There was an increased reliance

spin cycle

BY JESSICA CLARK AND TRACY VAN SLYKE

Sound Byte Science

In July, Bush's veto of a bill on stem-cell funding stirred up a flurry of high-profile science news stories. For the most part, however, science gets the shaft: on average, science stories make up only two percent of network news coverage. And, according to a recent book by *Chronicle of Higher Education* writer Vincent Kiernan, the sliver of information that does reach the larger public may be narrowed yet further by the entrenched practices of science journalism.

In *Embargoed Science*, Kiernan examines how a handful of elite journals generate both buzz and scientific consensus by enforcing an

"embargo" on findings—providing journalists with advance access to journal articles under the condition that they not report on them until a specified date. Many journals also apply the "Ingelfinger Rule," pioneered by *New England Journal of Medicine* (NEJM) editor Franz Ingelfinger in 1969. This policy decrees that "a given journal will not publish a scientific paper that has already been disseminated, particularly through the popular press."

While journal editors say that the rule helps to limit coverage of findings that aren't appropriately peer-reviewed, Kiernan notes that such practices just reinforce

the already-disproportionate influence of major publications like *NEJM*, *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *Science*, and *Nature*. Embargoes are as much about marketing as about research integrity—the cozy relationship between beat journalists and journal editors means that those journals end up as the source for the bulk of popular science stories

In practice, this means that important scientific breakthroughs may take longer to reach the public, and that scientists are left with "few options for cooperating with reporters who learn about research through independent channels."

Critics of the system say that it restricts the free flow of information and influences which stories rise to the top. By providing "information subsidies," and artificial time pegs, science journals bias the news in much the same way that the White House slants coverage by restricting access to political heavyweights.

While eliminating embargos might make journalists have to scramble, the end result would be more original, honest reporting. "The embargo," he concludes, "should go."

at home and abroad on suppression by force and an increasingly arrogant determination to 'go it alone' in the world."

"This was not written when George W. Bush ignored the United Nations, colleagues, international treaties and advice of allies and started a war," MacPherson comments, "but by Stone during Cold War escalation."

MacPherson's book is remarkable for its hybrid nature. It is a biography, sure, meant both as an examination of his life and as a document to defend Stone from what MacPherson calls "posthumous lies perpetuated by today's right-wing media." But it offers an unusually rich context that provides, in MacPherson's words, "a historical treatise on the press" and "Stone's running commentary on twentieth-century America."

Stone got his start as a newspaper reporter and editorialist in the '20s, a teenaged prodigy. MacPherson quotes Stone at age 14, observing debates about evolution at the Scopes Monkey Trial in Tennessee: "There still seem to be many worthy gentlemen ... who wish to anchor the world in a sea of narrow minds (including their own) and hold it there, lest it move forward. ... They are utterly out of place in this age of rationalism."

MacPherson explores the factors leading to Stone's indifference to being branded a troublemaking outcast, including his frail build, impaired eyesight and homely looks, as well as his good fortune in finding a patron who helped launch his journalism career at age 13. That unconcern yielded powerful enemies: Stone's FBI file was at least 5,000 pages thick, in part because the journalist never stopped opening the curtain on J. Edgar Hoover, who he considered a "glorified Dick Tracy" and a "sacred cow" within government. While undeniably true, few journalists dared to publish such characterizations while Hoover lived.

But Stone never wanted the role of insider journalist. MacPherson opens the book with this Stone quotation: "You've really got to wear a chastity belt in Washington to preserve your journalistic virginity. Once the secretary of state invites you to lunch and asks your opinion, you're sunk." Throughout the book, MacPherson invokes journalist Walter Lippmann, the ultimate insider, as a foil for Stone. Like Stone, Lippmann was a talented and intelligent writer. But Lippmann—like so many of his journalist brethren—needed

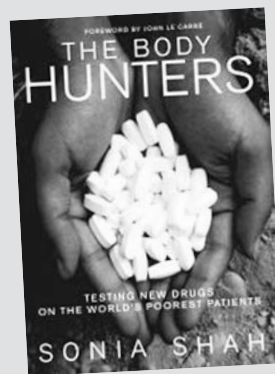
excerpt



Third World Lab Rats

In her new book, The Body Hunters: How the Drug Industry Tests Its Products On the World's Poorest Patients (The New Press, 2006), journalist Sonia Shah attacks the notion that deception and exploitation of patients in poor countries are necessary and acceptable "side effects" in the business of medical research.

There's nothing terrible about the truth that medical research imposes burdens. But generally speaking, we don't like to know it. The very notion of experimenting upon humans sounds sinister. And yet, if anything, we only want ever more drugs to help or enhance us, and more data to assure our trembling selves of their safety and effectiveness. The response to these contradictory desires has been the same since the mid-1800s, when scientists hell-bent on dissecting animals skirted the outcries of British antivivisectionists by cloaking their slicing in secrecy. Today, savvy drugmakers loudly publicize new medical products, but conduct the required experimentation quietly. ... The trend within the drug industry to conduct their experimental drug trials in poor countries is, as yet, in its infancy. But it is growing fast.



Major drugmakers such as GlaxoSmithKline, Wyeth and Merck—already conducting between 30 and 50 percent of their experiments outside the United States and Western Europe—plan to step up the number of their foreign trials by up to 67 percent by 2006, according to *USA Today*. And while armies of clinical investigators in the United States shrink, dropping by 11 percent between 2001 and 2003, those abroad fatten, increasing by 8 percent over the same period, according to a 2005 study by the Tufts Center for Drug Development. "The outsourcing of drug research is beginning to accelerate," reported the *Washington Post* in May 2005.

his vanity fed by the powerful, and thus sometimes concealed information that should have been revealed.

Stone's gutsy, relentless reporting played a role in ending Senator Joseph McCarthy's reign of anti-Communist terror by providing ammunition to mainstream journalists that they never would have dug up on their own. Information he uncovered about Richard Nixon's paranoid tendencies revealed that he was making crucial decisions based on something other than logic. Stone influenced investigative reporting as it is practiced today by never kowtowing to those in government and by closely reading documents other journalists thought boring or irrelevant.

The skepticism about government that emerged during the Vietnam War enshrined Stone as a journalistic icon. His reporting received so much justifiable attention that the newsletter began to make

money. The charm of MacPherson's subject and book is hinted at in this passage: "A toiler outside the system, Stone was never one to take a vow of poverty and reveled in buying his wife a mink coat, joking that he had become a war profiteer. His irredeemable optimism made it all sound simple, but he worked long and furiously, relying on his own digging so that by the time he approached an official he was ready to confront him with facts."

Stone once admonished his fellow muckrakers, "If you want to know about governments, all you have to know is two words, 'governments lie.'" Exposing official lies was Stone's greatest legacy, but there was an important flip side to his skepticism. Stone, as MacPherson writes, "never stopped praising the American freedoms that allowed him to speak and to think as he did. That is why he fought so hard against those who were bent on tarnishing them." ■

BY TERRY J. ALLEN

Sick to Death of Bush



TRUST ME, GEORGE Bush says, perched on the remains of Geneva Conventions, the Constitution and habeas corpus.

From this moral high ground, the United States is assuring the world that a new

facility for researching a horror shop of weaponized infectious diseases will be used purely for defensive purposes. The National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center's (NBACC) \$128 million, 160,000-square-foot facility is under construction at Fort Detrick, Md. There, the United States has already weaponized more than a dozen diseases—including anthrax, plague, botulism and ebola—and bioengineered war-friendly “improvements.” Scientists are also using DNA-synthesizing techniques to fabricate genetically altered or man-made viruses, and to study the feasibility of creating germ weapons targeting particular ethnicities.

“De facto, we are going to make bio-warfare pathogens at NBACC in order to study them,” Penrose Albright, former assistant Homeland Security secretary for science and technology, told the *Washington Post*.

The 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention made it illegal under international and U.S. law to make or stockpile bacteriological or viral organisms for use as weapons. The United States is exploiting a loophole: The treaty allows nations to develop small amounts of biological warfare agents for defensive research.

That, according to a NBACC Power Point presentation, briefly posted on the Internet and quickly removed, is what the Fort Detrick lab does—in secret and without meaningful monitoring. The profound secrecy that surrounds the project, as well as CIA and

intelligence involvement, raises alarms; these are ratcheted up to red alert in light of the Bush administration's track record of violating international treaties and lying to the public. And then there is Congress' history of defining “oversight” as a failure to notice rather than a duty to oversee.

According to the Department of Defense, the secrecy surrounding the Fort Detrick expansion is necessary for national security. The interests of the public, administration officials argue (as they did to defend NSA spying), would be compromised by legislative and judicial meddling—a.k.a. the constitutionally mandated balance of powers.

Odds are the Fort Detrick research exceeds the purely defensive, rendering the CBW treaty as quaint as the Geneva Conventions barring torture. But even if the research conformed to law, what nation would believe that the United States abides by treaty obligations that limit its “war on terror”?

The possibilities for disaster are plentiful. By undermining the treaty, the United States greenlights other nations and groups to similarly “defend” themselves. And compared with making and delivering nukes, creating and distributing biowarfare agents is dead simple. A competent scientist with a good lab can cook up enough to sicken and kill thousands, perhaps millions.

Second, the lesson taught by recent dealings with Iran and North Korea is that possession of weapons of mass destruction tends to inoculate against U.S. attack. Secret expansion of U.S. bioterrorism research—without monitoring through the CBW treaty—could spark a bioarms race.

And then there is the risk of accident. On its Web site, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), a lead government agency on bioterrorism, asks: “Has there ever been an accident at a BSL-3 or BSL-4 facility?” (Bio Safety Level-4

labs hold the most dangerous infectious agents.)

NIAD cheerily answers: “No,” although “Rare accidents such as needlesticks may cause exposure of laboratory staff,” but not “to other workers or to the community.”

But according to the Council for Responsible Genetics, “mistakes happen.” Fort Detrick and other Level-3 and -4 facilities have had a number of accidents, including the loss of ebola and anthrax samples; exposure of workers to anthrax; a three hour power failure that compromised containment and led workers (you're going to love this) to seal the windows with duct tape; a leaking test chamber that infected workers with tuberculosis; a researcher who contracted the ebola-like sabia virus and exposed 75 other workers; and two researchers infected with HIV from defective gloves. And, last but not least, don't forget that the anthrax spores used in the September 2001 mail attacks traced back to Fort Detrick.

NIAD is equally noncommittal about the safety of shipping bio agents to and from labs: “There are specific Government regulations for transportation of infectious materials. Infectious materials are safely transported worldwide on a daily basis under these regulations.” Feel better? Perhaps you didn't hear that in 2003 a package containing West Nile virus samples exploded and exposed workers at the Columbus airport.

And then there is the insanity of trusting critical scientific decisions to an administration that gives equal weight to the theory of evolution and the fable of creationism, that undermines stem cell research by confusing a zygote with an infant, and that is waiting until it has to govern in scuba gear before acknowledging global warming.

Trust me, indeed. ■

Contact Terry J. Allen at tallen@igc.org.

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Bird-dogging

Continued from back page

When the topic turns to Iraq, Hillary repeats the same garbled message in various locutions: We shouldn't stay, but we shouldn't not stay; while before we go we should get a job done, we shouldn't be doing the job we're doing. If you parse her carefully worded speeches and statements, the only significant differences between Hillary and Bush are that she thinks we need more troops on the ground in Iraq so the war can be better prosecuted—and that she is furiously trying to hide that position from her constituency.

No invitation to talk from Hillary's office was forthcoming. So CODEPINK NYC pulled together a coalition of local peace groups and launched a weekly vigil outside Hillary's office on Third Avenue at 49th Street. We bought enormous rubber ears from a theatrical supply company and made signs that said, "Hillary you're not listening, bring the troops home now." We passed out information about her positions, and we launched the Web site www.listenhillary.org.

Standing on the sidewalk, in the dead of winter, it was remarkable how many passersby would stop and talk, amazed to learn how close her position on the war was to Bush's.

Soon after we launched the weekly vigil we got a call from Hillary's office to set up an appointment. Four of us met with Hillary's New York City "Director of Governmental Affairs," a fresh-faced and genial young woman who honestly appeared to know less about Hillary's voting record or statements on the war than the crowds on the sidewalk. She patronizingly told us that she would pass along our concerns to the senator.

After this fruitless meeting, we coordinated with peace groups around the state and CODEPINK chapters around the country, organizing a statewide and national campaign called "Bird-dog Hillary."

Wherever Hillary was appearing we were there with our signs and handouts, dressed in pink with big rubber ears. Women also got inside and raised their voices, raining down flyers from balconies, and generally making a notable, if momentary, ruckus. The results everywhere were similar: a genuine sense of amazed—and dismayed—recognition that Hillary's views on Iraq are out of

synch not only with those of many Democrats but of the vast majority of Americans, regardless of party affiliation.

CODEPINK has now become an almost integral part of the Hillary road show. The only major fundraiser we were unable to crash was the one for Hillary held in July by Rupert Murdoch, the location of which was a more tightly-held secret than the location of Dick Cheney's bunker. The rituals of the campaign trail and the fundraising gauntlet have given us a funny intimacy with her team.

In late May we were outside a fundraiser for Senator Robert Byrd in a private apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan at which Hillary was a "special guest." As the elderly Senator Byrd entered, one of us asked, "Senator Byrd, can you tell Hillary to stop supporting the war?"

Senator Byrd paused and answered, "Ladies, I don't tell *her* to do anything."

A few minutes later Senator Clinton drove up in her shiny black SUV accompanied by her Secret Service detail. As she walked past us, one of us asked, "Senator Clinton, when are you going to help end this war?"

Hillary's answer: "We're working on it."

After she entered the building one of her secret service guys, whom some of us by this point knew by name, winked and asked, "Will we be seeing you later?"

He was referring to the West Village fundraiser for Ohio gubernatorial candidate Ted Strickland that Hillary was co-hosting. A few minutes later we were on the subway heading downtown.

In June we bought tickets to a Women for Hillary fundraising luncheon at the Hilton Hotel in Midtown Manhattan. Eva-Lee, Missy and I went into the ballroom where 1,000 enthusiastic and decorous attendees were taking seats at their tables. I spotted a mother from my kid's school and a business acquaintance of my husband's who had told me point blank that she despised Hillary. What were they doing here? Placing their bets on the Democrats' leading horse.

Staging a protest at a Hillary event is a delightfully surreal experience. We were assigned to Table 121, way in the back (we paid \$125 apiece for our tickets; the tickets up front went for \$1,000) but very close to the bank of press cameras. We nervously ate our cold salmon and chatted with other women at our table.

We were in Hillaryland: we watched a slickly produced Hillary film in which she

single-handedly revived New York State's economy, palled around with firefighters and cured two children of cancer. A lot of eyes got misty, both on screen and in the audience.

Then she made a grand entrance down a side stairway, greeted with a standing ovation. She read through a very, very long list of politicians' wives and other supporters. And when she said "support" for the 100th time, Missy stood up and shouted, "What about supporting our troops by bringing them home?" This was our cue.

Eva-Lee and I removed the sweaters covering our pink T-shirts, on which we had written pro-troop messages with black fabric markers (mine said "2,475 U.S. military deaths: How many more?") Then we unfurled our pink satin TROOPS HOME NOW banners. As we started chanting "troops home now," the cameras strayed from Hillary and toward us.

The Hillary campaign employees, secret service guys and hotel security who came to escort us out were resolutely polite, by now familiar with the recurrent and inevitable drill. One young campaign worker said, "If you'll be quiet, you can stay." I answered loudly, "Troops out now" and off we went. Missy ran forward, handing out photos of her nephew who had been killed in Iraq.

THE BULK OF the e-mail we get congratulates us on our work, but some complains about the "Bird-dog Hillary" campaign. One woman reminded us that Hillary was a feminist who wore sandals in college and suggested that as women and feminists we should be supporting her. Another New Yorker asked why we weren't targeting our senior senator, Chuck Schumer, who isn't much better than Hillary on the war. That one had an easy answer: Chuck Schumer is neither running for re-election nor positioning himself for a presidential run.

CODEPINK will continue to push the war issue to center stage, as others are doing in Connecticut, fueling Ned Lamont's successful challenge to Senator Joe Lieberman. When he was stumping for Lieberman in July, President Bill Clinton referred to the war as "the pink elephant in the room." Well, the pink elephant has raised its head, as has CODEPINK. ■

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BY NANCY KRICORIAN

IN NOVEMBER 2005 HILLARY Rodham Clinton sent out a fundraising letter to her constituents. “Part of my job is being a good listener,” she wrote, going on to describe all the good listening she does as the junior senator from New York. She concluded, “Now I’d like to listen to you.”

In the envelope with the letter was a three-page, 18-question “2005 Critical National Issues Survey” addressing a range of topics from jobs to homeland security to separation of church and state. Not one question in the survey mentioned the war in Iraq—an omission that came as no surprise to those of us at the New York chapter of CODEPINK Women for Peace.

At the time Hillary prepared her “questionnaire,” close to 2,300 U.S. troops and more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians had died, and polls showed that most Americans were worried about the war and its ill effects, including rising prices at the gas pump. But somehow, Hillary and her handlers thought that ignoring the war was the strategically smart thing to do. And they were right.

It turns out that Hillary has done a tremendous job—of getting New York Democrats to assume that because right-wing Republicans hate her she must oppose the war. Most New York Democratic voters also don’t realize that she co-sponsored an amendment to ban flag-burning, is against marriage equality for gays and lesbians, supports the death penalty, votes consistently for Star Wars appropriations and has served on the board of Wal-Mart for six years. Yet, she is consistently touted as the “liberal Democrat from New York.”

But it is her position—or, rather, her exquisitely-phrased, calculatedly imprecise non-position—on the Iraq War, accompanied by her consistent voting record in support of the Bush administration on Iraq, that had our local CODEPINK chapter trying for weeks before she sent out her “I’m a listener” mailer, to meet with Hillary or someone on her New York City staff.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 47

BIRD-DOGGING HILLARY CLINTON



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